

Wind farm worries

Planned landing site in Wainscott issue at hearing

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The landing site for LIPA's South Shore wind farm was a point of contentious debate at a public hearing in East Hampton Tuesday, with opponents in Wainscott raising a wave of concerns about potential impacts.

Nearly all the approximately three dozen speakers at a hearing by the state Public Service Commission expressed support for renewable energy and even offshore wind, but appeared widely divided about the landing site for the cable. Many Wainscott residents spoke against a plan to land the cable on a section of Beach Lane, expressing concerns about industrialization of the tiny community, electromagnetic fields and impacts on the environment.

The developer, Orsted, said the cable would be horizontally drilled and buried deep under the beach, but opponents



About three dozen spoke on the planned South Fork Wind Farm.

pointed to an exposed cable at the company's Block Island wind farm in expressing doubts about its plan for Long Island.

"We're going to have chaos in East Hampton Town," said Elaine Jones, a 76-year resident.

"The people of Wainscott are not against wind power," said resident Mike Mahoney. "The proposal I don't approve of is landing it at Beach Lane."

Orsted, which bought out the project's original developer Deepwater Wind last year, is considering two alternatives for the cable, including another at Hither Hills to the east that would require state but not local approvals. The company has offered a benefits package of \$8.5 million should it receive East Hampton Town Board and East Hampton trustee ap-

provals for the Wainscott site.

Orsted's Long Island Development manager Jennifer Garvey said the project timeline is "still on track," even without town approvals. She said the company is working on a parallel track to receive easements from the state for the Hither Hills site should the Wainscott site not receive town approvals.

PSC administrative law judge Anthony Belsito, who presided over the hearing, said there was no formal timeline for the commission to approve the so-called Article 7 certificate for the cable, which would enter state and local waters from 15 proposed turbines some 50 miles away off Rhode Island. The commission, he said, could decide between the two landing sites in East Hampton, suggest a new one, or choose none at all by denying the requested permit, he said.

Several college students and environmental activists at the hearing spoke in favor of the project, and argued the landing site was secondary to the greater need to mitigate climate change. "It's essential for the survival of our world" to transition away from fossil fuels, said Jessica Goldman, call-

ing the cable's impact a "minimal disruption" compared with that of carbon emissions.

Prior to the hearing, conservative watchdog group Reclaim New York announced it had filed a lawsuit on behalf of an East Hampton resident to force the state to fully disclose the cost of the South Fork project.

The group's lawsuit on behalf of resident Si Kinsella cited his Freedom of Information Law filings with the state comptroller's office seeking access to the full contract to determine the cost per kilowatt hour that LIPA and its ratepayers will pay for energy from the project, which is scheduled to go online in December 2022.

LIPA has said the project will cost average residential ratepayers more than \$1.57 a month, but Kinsella is seeking more detailed information. "I'm not against offshore wind, nor am I against Deepwater Wind," Kinsella said at a briefing. "I am against this particular project."

Orsted's Garvey pointed to cost information provided by LIPA and the \$1.62 billion total cost published by the state comptroller in response, but Kinsella said it wasn't detailed enough.

Safety in the sunshine

Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone rubs on some sunscreen from new free dispensers at Smith Point County Park in Shirley on Tuesday. With him are Legis. Susan Berland, left, Legis. Al Krupski and Dr. Donald Teplitz, COO of Good Samaritan Hospital Medical Center.

