

Nantucket demands accountability from Vineyard Wind after collapse of offshore wind turbine blade last year

The town said the developer fails to communicate information about its emergency plans and intensifies light pollution.

By **Jessica Ma** Globe Correspondent, Updated July 29, 2025, 6:04 p.m.



Nantucket officials are calling for accountability from Vineyard Wind, after its damaged turbine blade from an offshore wind farm detached last year and spread debris onto the town's beaches. NANTUCKET CURRENT

More than a year after a damaged turbine blade detached and washed large amounts of debris onto Nantucket's shores, town officials are calling for accountability from the turbine's developer.

At a press conference Tuesday, town officials said Vineyard Wind has repeatedly failed to communicate critical information and polluted the sky with its turbines' lights, while not including Nantucket in its emergency plans. The town's Select Board outlined 15 demands to Vineyard Wind to address these concerns, including sending emergency text notifications to town officials and emailing monthly updates to the town.

The demands are the town's way of "putting our stake in the sand," said Brooke Mohr, a member of the Select Board.

"In the aftermath of the blade failure, (Vineyard Wind) increases the likelihood that they will, again, be unprepared for disaster, and they leave our community vulnerable to future project failures," Mohr said.

The announcement follows the town's [\\$10.5 million settlement](#) with GE Vernova, the turbine's manufacturer — but Vineyard Wind was not listed as a signatory.

After the [turbine blade detached](#) in July 2024, Nantucket was not notified with "thorough transparency" for three days, until fiberglass debris started floating up on its beaches, Mohr said. The town shut down its beaches at the peak of its tourist season.

During the permitting process for Vineyard Wind in 2020, federal law did not give localities the power of veto; the town instead negotiated a community benefits agreement, a contract between Nantucket and the developer that is enforceable in court.

Vineyard Wind, town officials said, has not met the outlined expectations in the agreement, including its commitment to "proactive communications," from the turbines' development to maintenance.

“We’re here today, because the company has repeatedly failed to fulfill the communications obligation of the (community benefits agreement) during times of both regular operations, and critically, during times of emergency,” said Greg Werkheiser, an attorney hired by the town to handle cases involving the wind projects.

“Prior to initiating any litigation, we are giving the company an opportunity to comply with its legal requirements,” Werkheiser added.

Vineyard Wind, the offshore energy project’s developer, is owned by Denmark-based Avangrid Renewables and Copenhagen Infrastructure in partnership with Spain-based Iberdrola.

“As it has always done, Vineyard Wind will continue to meet all state and federal permit requirements, and coordinate with the Town consistent with the Good Neighbor Agreement,” a Vineyard Wind spokesperson wrote in an email.

The town also cited concerns about light pollution. The community benefit agreement required the developer to install an “automatic detection and lighting system,” which only turns on lights when it detects a plane or ship in the vicinity.

“Due to lengthy delays in (Vineyard Wind’s) activation of the required lighting reduction system on their turbines, they have been polluting our night sky with dozens of blinking red lights for several years now,” Mohr said.

In its demands, the town said Vineyard Wind should compensate Nantucket with \$25,000 per turbine, each day that the turbine lights are on without activating this system.

The community benefits agreement has come under fire by some Nantucket residents, who say town officials are restricted in their criticism of Vineyard Wind. An advocacy group, Keep Nantucket Wild, submitted a petition to the Select Board last year that

garnered more than 2,000 signatures, requesting the town to back out from the agreement.

But Mohr said withdrawing from the agreement would “weaken our town’s position” when it came to making demands, calling it “the most effective legal tool” the town has.

The officials urged Vineyard Wind to respond to the list of demands within two weeks. They did not comment on what actions they would take if the developer does not follow through.

The demands come at a trying time for offshore wind projects. President Trump rolled back clean energy incentives in the newly passed [“One Big Beautiful Bill Act,”](#) signed into law on July 4.

The town has consistently said that clean energy is “a priority for the world,” according to Werkheiser.

The town just wants to see that these projects comply with outlined requirements, Mohr said.

“We’re on the leading edge of a new industry in this country,” Mohr said. “We literally are on the leading edge of it, physically and geographically.”

Material from the Associated Press was used in this report.

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