

## **Nantucket officials accuse offshore wind developer of going into hiding since Trump's election**

Giant wind turbine blades for the Vineyard Winds project are stacked on racks in the harbor, July 11, 2023, in New Bedford, Mass. (AP Photo/Charles Krupa, File)

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BOSTON (AP) — Officials in Massachusetts' Nantucket island on Tuesday accused the developer of the nation's first utility-scale offshore wind project of not responding to their safety queries since Donald Trump's [election](#) after a [massive wind turbine](#) broke apart last year and its fragments washed up on beaches.

Nantucket's select board gave Vineyard Wind two weeks to respond to a list of demands, including that it follow deadline requirements for notifying local officials of emergencies. Violations could result in fines up to \$250,000, the town said, although it was unclear how such a policy would be enforced.

Board member Brooke Mohr suggested the Trump administration's skepticism toward offshore wind projects is to blame for what Mohr said was Vineyard Wind's lack of communication.

The town said Vineyard Wind, which is owned by Denmark-based Avangrid Renewables and Copenhagen Infrastructure in partnership with Spain-based Iberdrola, has failed to respond to private requests for changes to its protocols. Litigation may be a next step if the town's demands are unmet, officials said.

"We believe that they are concerned about the change in policy at the federal level and drawing scrutiny from the new administration, which has ordered a review of offshore wind permitting practices," Mohr said during a virtual briefing with news reporters. "However, hiding is not the solution to their problems, nor is it the solution to our problems."

The project about 14 miles (23 kilometers) off nearby Martha's Vineyard was approved by President Joe Biden's administration in May 2021, a key step in Biden's plans to increase U.S. reliance on offshore wind by 2030.

Fiberglass fragments of a massive wind turbine blade that broke apart off Nantucket began washing ashore last summer during the peak of tourist season after pieces of the blade at the Vineyard Wind project began falling into the Atlantic Ocean in July.

In the final days of the Biden administration, federal regulators lifted a suspension order on the project, pending the removal of all installed blades manufactured by GE Vernova.

GE Vernova, which agreed to pay \$10.5 million in a settlement earlier this month to compensate island businesses that suffered losses due to the blade failure, [blamed a manufacturing problem](#) at one of its factories in Canada and stated that there was no indication of a design flaw. It reinspected all blades made at the factory and removed other blades made there from the Vineyard Wind location.

On Tuesday, town officials accused Vineyard Wind of violating its legal obligations to communicate regularly with the town or engage the town with its emergency response plans following the blade failure. It also said Vineyard Wind hasn't done enough to reduce light pollution.

Nantucket officials refused to include Vineyard Wind as a signatory in the \$10.5 million settlement, citing the company's "lack of leadership, transparency, and stewardship" following the blade failure. Mohr said in the settlement, the town didn't "seed its rights to hold Vineyard Wind accountable."

A Vineyard Wind spokesperson said that after concluding the settlement process, it has "anticipated resuming traditional communications and coordination" with the town "in a manner that supports a productive dialogue."

"Vineyard Wind believes the settlement represents a fair and conclusive outcome for all parties, and hopes the Town of Nantucket will move forward in the spirit of that settlement and work together towards a constructive, positive relationship," the company said.