

After offshore wind blade broke, Nantucket to use \$10.5M settlement for community claims

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Cape Cod Times

- Nantucket secured a \$10.5 million settlement from GE Vernova, manufacturer of an offshore wind turbine blade that broke apart in 2024.
- The settlement aims to compensate Nantucket businesses and the town for losses and cleanup costs incurred after the blade broke apart.
- While some praised the settlement, others criticized it as insufficient and expressed concerns about the environmental impact and Vineyard Wind's accountability.

Nearly a year to the day since a turbine blade in the [Vineyard Wind 1](#) project broke apart and scattered debris into the ocean, [Nantucket](#) — the most directly affected community — has secured a [\\$10.5 million settlement](#) from [GE Vernova](#), the blade manufacturer. The settlement was announced Friday, July 11.

When the blade broke apart July 13, 2024 —peak tourist season —thousands of pounds of material washed ashore on Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard and Cape Cod during peak tourist season.

In the aftermath, Nantucket businesses reported significant economic losses, while the town and others were saddled with extensive cleanup costs. Now, as part of the settlement, officials are planning to launch a community claims fund to help recoup both private and public losses.

An independent third-party administrator will handle compensation claims, officials said.

“It was really important in this negotiation that we take the burden off individuals and businesses of having to seek funds directly,” said [Nantucket Select Board member Brooke Mohr](#) said.

Officials don't yet have an exact estimate of full damages, but Mohr said town leaders support the settlement as fair. “I'm generally pleased with the outcome,” she said.

Some in the region were unhappy with the settlement including Veronica Bonet, of [ACK for Whales](#), which is based on Nantucket.

She brought up continuing concerns about the marine ecosystem and called the settlement a "sweetheart deal."

Town: Holding Vineyard Wind accountable

Greg Werkheiser, of [Cultural Heritage Partners](#) — one of the law firms representing the town alongside [KP Law](#) and [Wyche](#) — emphasized that the fund will be run outside of town hall. “We want somebody who can look at it fairly and dispassionately to make sure that, when the funds are distributed, it’s done fairly and to maximum effect,” he said.

GE Vernova [attributed the blade failure to a manufacturing flaw](#) at its factory in Gaspé, Canada, where faulty bonding of blade materials led to structural collapse. By order of the federal [Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement](#), [the company has since removed 66 blades](#) made at the same factory.

Nantucket officials praised GE Vernova for its “leadership in reaching this agreement,” according to a [public release](#), but Werkheiser said the town’s accountability efforts are not over. Vineyard Wind, he noted, is not a party to the agreement — by the town’s choice.

“The town is going to have more to say on its thoughts about Vineyard Wind in the next couple of weeks,” he said. “But we’re trying not to step on the good news of the settlement agreement before we turn our attention back to Vineyard Wind.”

“We are not losing track of the importance of holding Vineyard Wind to the standards to which it is obligated,” Werkheiser stressed.

[Avangrid](#), which is developing Vineyard Wind 1 in partnership [Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners](#), has declined to comment on the project’s status.

It is not known how many turbines have been constructed to date on the 62-turbine, 800-megawatt project. A year ago, 24 had been erected, and at least 10 had been commissioned and were producing power prior to the collapse. At least four are reportedly operating as of Friday, July 11.

Cyr: 'Further commitment to make things right'

[State Sen. Julian Cyr, D-Provincetown](#), who represents the Cape and Islands, called the settlement a meaningful step forward and affirmed the importance of moving ahead with renewable energy — responsibly.

“This seems like a mutually agreed-upon outcome and a substantial sum of money that will help offset both the town’s costs and the losses suffered by local businesses,” he said. “With this settlement, we’re seeing further commitment to make things right.”

Cyr acknowledged the “flawed” early response to the blade failure, calling it “rocky and unacceptable,” but credited federal, state, and local agencies with mounting a robust cleanup.

Cyr said he still believes that offshore wind — along with solar and other energy sources — remains essential to reducing reliance on fossil fuels and key to reducing energy costs.

Xiarhos: 'Only four turbines are operating'

Other observers also weighed in on the one-year anniversary of the blade failure. Some offered continuing support for offshore wind, while others voiced deep concerns about environmental impacts and the potential for rising energy costs.

[State Rep. Steven Xiarhos](#), R-West Barnstable, worries about broader industrial effects.

“Cape Cod is fragile, and we can't trade one environmental crisis for another,” he said. “The blade failure confirmed serious safety concerns many have long raised.”

One year later, he added, “we’re hearing that only four turbines are operating, while replacements and repairs continue — and that doesn’t inspire confidence.”

State supports its energy strategy

Maria Hardiman, spokeswoman for the state [Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs](#), defended the state’s strategy.

“Offshore wind produced right here in Massachusetts will help lower costs, meet rising energy demand, and create thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in economic benefits,” she said.

The Healey-Driscoll Administration, she said, “will continue to pursue an all-of-the-above energy strategy that includes critical, available, and affordable resources like offshore wind.”

Concerns from across region

“We remain very concerned about the fate of the North Atlantic right whale,” ACK for Whales' Bonet said. The organization worries about offshore wind construction and operational noise and its potential effects on the whales and the phytoplankton they feed on.

The organization members are “greatly disappointed” in the settlement and “the town’s failure to protect the interests of its residents, citizens, businesses and taxpayers by entering into a sweetheart deal with which both Vineyard Wind and GE Vernova walk away scot-free,” Bonet said.

“After causing an environmental disaster that affected beaches from Nantucket to Montauk and polluting the water column for hundreds of square miles with everything from huge, jagged shards to microscopic pieces of toxic blade fragments that threaten the health and

safety of the greater Nantucket community and our ocean, we are shocked that the town has once again opted to muzzle itself for money," she said.

Susanne Conley, of [Save Greater Dowses Beach](#) — a citizens group in Barnstable that's raised concerns about offshore wind development — is also critical.

"I am more convinced than ever that these projects, including Vineyard Wind, are an environmental disaster offshore and onshore," she said.

Conley called the settlement "very premature."

"We have no idea how much fiberglass, PVC foam, and epoxy resin remains in the ocean," she said. "These things usually take years to settle. Why be in such a hurry? And what is Vineyard Wind's culpability? Infuriating."

Jerry Leeman, CEO of the [New England Fishermen's Stewardship Association](#), said the blade failure "underlined that offshore wind companies are more focused on covering up their failures than on productive coexistence with the fisheries."

He has mixed feelings about Nantucket's settlement.

"NEFSA is pleased that GE Vernova is making the people of Nantucket whole," he said, but he's disappointed Vineyard Wind is not part of the settlement. The company, he said, has "been in CYA mode ever since their turbine disintegrated."

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