

Nantucket and Vineyard Wind agree to oversight of offshore project. But how to enforce?

[Heather McCarron](#)

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- Nantucket and Vineyard Wind reached a preliminary agreement on oversight measures for the offshore wind project.
- The agreement addresses transparency, emergency preparedness, and public communication, but enforcement mechanisms are still under discussion.
- Nantucket demanded better communication, emergency response planning, and financial guarantees after past incidents.

Amid continuing pressure from local officials and residents, [Vineyard Wind](#) has agreed in principle to a set of oversight measures aimed at improving [transparency, emergency preparedness, and public communication](#) with the town of Nantucket — though town officials stress nothing's final until it's in writing and enforceable.

The agreement followed an Aug. 21 meeting between town officials, led by Select Board member Brooke Mohr, and Vineyard Wind leadership, led by CEO Klaus Moeller. The meeting was held in response to a [list of 15 accountability demands](#) the town issued in late July.

“Both parties agree that these commitments must be backed by enforcement mechanisms; however, no agreement has yet been reached on how to address noncompliance,” town leaders noted in a public statement issued following the Aug. 21 meeting.

According to town leaders, the company agreed to providing regular, detailed updates to the town, faster responses to questions, access to regulatory documents, and immediate notification in the event of emergencies. Nantucket officials and residents will also play a role in shaping the company's revised emergency response plans, according to town leaders.

Vineyard Wind additionally agreed to share performance data from its [Aircraft Detection Lighting System](#), which is designed to keep [turbine lights off except when aircraft is approaching and passing overhead](#), so the town can confirm the system is working as it should.

The company is constructing its 800-megawatt, 62-turbine Vineyard Wind 1 project in waters starting about 15 miles southwest of the island. According to the latest report from

Iberdrola, a parent company, 23 turbines were fully installed as of late July, with 17 operational.

What is the issue between Nantucket and Vineyard Wind?

During a press conference on July 29, Mohr asserted that Vineyard Wind has “kept Nantucket and its residents in the dark” by failing to fully communicate critical details in a timely manner about its “massive industrial project just off our coast” — a lapse that, she said, “endangers the public and undermines trust.”

Nantucket leaders also accused Vineyard Wind of avoiding responsibility when things go wrong, saying the company "has pointed a finger at everyone but themselves, blaming subcontractors, GE Vernova, federal regulators."

Tensions peaked in July 2024 [when a turbine blade shattered](#), sending 50 tons of fiberglass and foam into the ocean. According to Mohr, Nantucket wasn't notified for three days, after debris began washing up on the island's beaches.

Among Nantucket's demands issued July 29: improved communications, inclusion in emergency response planning, and contingency funding. Officials suggested that Vineyard Wind should be required to pay \$250,000 for any future violations of the communications protocol, and \$25,000 per turbine per day for any operation without an active aircraft lighting reduction system.

Additionally, the town called for a \$10 million emergency cleanup fund in escrow and an agreement to permanently halt new work if future turbine-related incidents force beach closures or shellfish bans for seven consecutive days or 14 total days in any six-month period.

After their Aug. 21 meeting, the two sides “are putting to paper the specific language of each protocol” to achieve the initially agreed-upon measures.

“We are cautiously optimistic,” said Greg Werkheiser, an attorney with [Cultural Heritage Partners](#) representing the town.

How will Nantucket's demands of Vineyard Wind be enforced?

But one major piece remains unsettled: enforcement.

The state has offered to help close that gap.

“The town intends to work with Governor Healey’s office, at her invitation, to identify potential enforcement tools and ensure Vineyard Wind commits adequate resources to emergency preparedness and response,” according to town leaders.

Vineyard Wind did not respond to a request for comment on the preliminary agreement. The company in July issued a statement saying it wants a constructive relationship with the island. The company said it anticipates "resuming traditional communications and coordination with the town in a manner that supports a productive dialogue," as well as complying with all state and federal permitting requirements and coordinating with the town "consistent with the Good Neighbor Agreement."

A follow-up meeting is planned on Sept. 12. Until a final agreement is in place, Nantucket officials emphasized that no part of their demands as outlined on July 29 are considered resolved.

"We welcome Vineyard Wind's renewed focus on accountability," they said in their statement, and they "look forward to finalizing standards that uphold the commitments" made in the Good Neighbor pact.

Heather McCarron writes about climate change, environment, energy, science and the natural world, in addition to news and features in Barnstable and Brewster. Reach her at hmccarron@capecodonline.com.