

Vineyard Wind on notice. Nantucket issues list of demands, deadline. 'Step up or step out'



[Heather McCarron](#)

Cape Cod Times

- Nantucket officials issued 15 demands to Vineyard Wind, citing broken promises and lack of communication, and gave the company a two-week deadline to respond.
- The town is pressuring federal regulators to enforce Vineyard Wind's commitments and urging state and federal officials to support their demands.
- Despite the escalating tensions, Nantucket is not yet withdrawing from the Good Neighbor Agreement, believing it would weaken their position.

Nantucket has drawn a line in the sand with [Vineyard Wind](#), with urgent demands, a looming deadline, and pressure for answers and accountability.

On July 29, island [leaders issued 15 formal demands](#) calling on the offshore wind company to “change its conduct” and bring its operations into “compliance with its obligations and public commitments.”

The town has given the company until Aug. 12 to respond.

“This is not the first time that Vineyard Wind has seen many of these demands, so we expect two weeks is plenty of time for them to confirm their agreement or to explain publicly why they should not be accountable in these basic ways,” said Selectwoman Brooke Mohr.



Among Nantucket's demands are improved communications, inclusion in emergency response planning, and contingency funding. Officials also want Vineyard Wind 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 is calling for a \$10 million emergency cleanup fund in escrow and an agreement to permanently halt new projects if future turbine-related incidents force beach closures or shellfish bans for seven consecutive days or 14 total days in any six-month period.

'That is not leadership' — Lack of communication, accountability cited

During an hour-long press conference, 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 dodging responsibility, saying that when confronted with issues, the company “has pointed a finger at everyone but themselves, blaming subcontractors, GE Vernova, federal regulators.”

Blade failure shakes trust

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.

“In response to criticism about this lack of timely communication, which heightened the danger to our beach-going visitors, fishermen, environment and businesses, Vineyard Wind [CEO Klaus Moeller](#) promised it would not happen again,” she said. “Indeed, he promised that if there was any indication of a potential emergency, Nantucket would hear about it immediately.”



But months later, when [lightning struck the same turbine](#), Mohr said Vineyard Wind again failed to notify the town — it was residents who first alerted officials.

“There are many more failures to communicate,” she added.

Town wants role in future crisis planning

Despite assurances, Mohr said the company has failed to involve Nantucket in designing emergency plans or improving coordination and claimed it has also delayed environmental reporting related to the blade incident.

Greg Werkheiser, an attorney with [Cultural Heritage Partners](#) representing the town, echoed island concerns, saying Vineyard Wind has “failed to involve Nantucket in whatever planning it might be doing,” including emergency response plans.

As a result, Nantucket is demanding a public emergency planning process within two months and inclusion in any future response design.

“The community should be able to know, review and give feedback on how the company will handle another such crisis,” he said.

Red lights on the horizon, frustration on shore

Nantucket’s [night sky is another central issue](#).

Under the [Good Neighbor Agreement](#) signed five years ago, Vineyard Wind committed to installing an aircraft detection lighting system that activates only when low-flying aircraft pass over the wind farm. Yet, "Nantucket residents have dealt with dozens and dozens of red lights constantly blinking throughout the night sky," said Werkheiser.



He said the company has not met multiple targets for activation, pointing at technical issues and blaming partners and subcontractors.

"We're publicly demanding that Vineyard Wind take accountability for its failure to timely reduce the turbine lighting and stop polluting the Nantucket sky," he said.

Vineyard Wind says it wants 'constructive' relationship

In response to the town's demands on July 29, Vineyard Wind emphasized that [a recent settlement agreement](#) already addressed the turbine blade incident.

"Earlier this month, Vineyard Wind, GE Vernova, and the town of Nantucket agreed to a settlement that resolved all claims and any harms related to the 2024 blade incident," a company spokesperson said.

Although Vineyard Wind is not a signatory on the settlement, it is listed as a third-party beneficiary.

The company added that it will continue to comply with all state and federal permitting requirements and coordinate with the town "consistent with the Good Neighbor Agreement."

“Following the conclusion of the settlement process, Vineyard Wind has anticipated resuming traditional communications and coordination with the town in a manner that supports a productive dialogue,” the spokesperson said.

Holding government to account

Nantucket leaders are pressing federal regulators — including the [Bureau of Ocean Energy Management](#) and [Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement](#) — to enforce the company’s commitments. And they're calling on state and federal elected officials to stand with the island in its demands.

Mohr warned that the company is setting a dangerous precedent, saying, "if you treat your project’s host community as an afterthought, you create a bad precedent for the industry that needs to succeed in the right ways to address climate change.”

According to Mohr and Werkheiser, Vineyard Wind’s approach since the blade failure — and more recently since the federal election — has been to “essentially go into hiding.”

Mohr agreed, saying: “We believe that they are concerned about the change in policy at the federal level and drawing scrutiny from the new administration." But "hiding is not the solution," she said.

A tactical move: Good Neighbor pact remains, for now

Despite the tensions Nantucket leaders are not ready to exit the Good Neighbor Agreement.

“At this time, we believe that withdrawal from the CBA would actually weaken our town's position,” Mohr said, explaining that "walking away from this agreement would prove to be a symbolic gesture only, that would not provide additional legal recourse to reduce the effects of these projects on Nantucket.”

In a final statement, Mohr said the overall message is simple: “Either step up or step out of our community and the waters off our shore.”

(This story was updated because an earlier version included an inaccuracy.)

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.