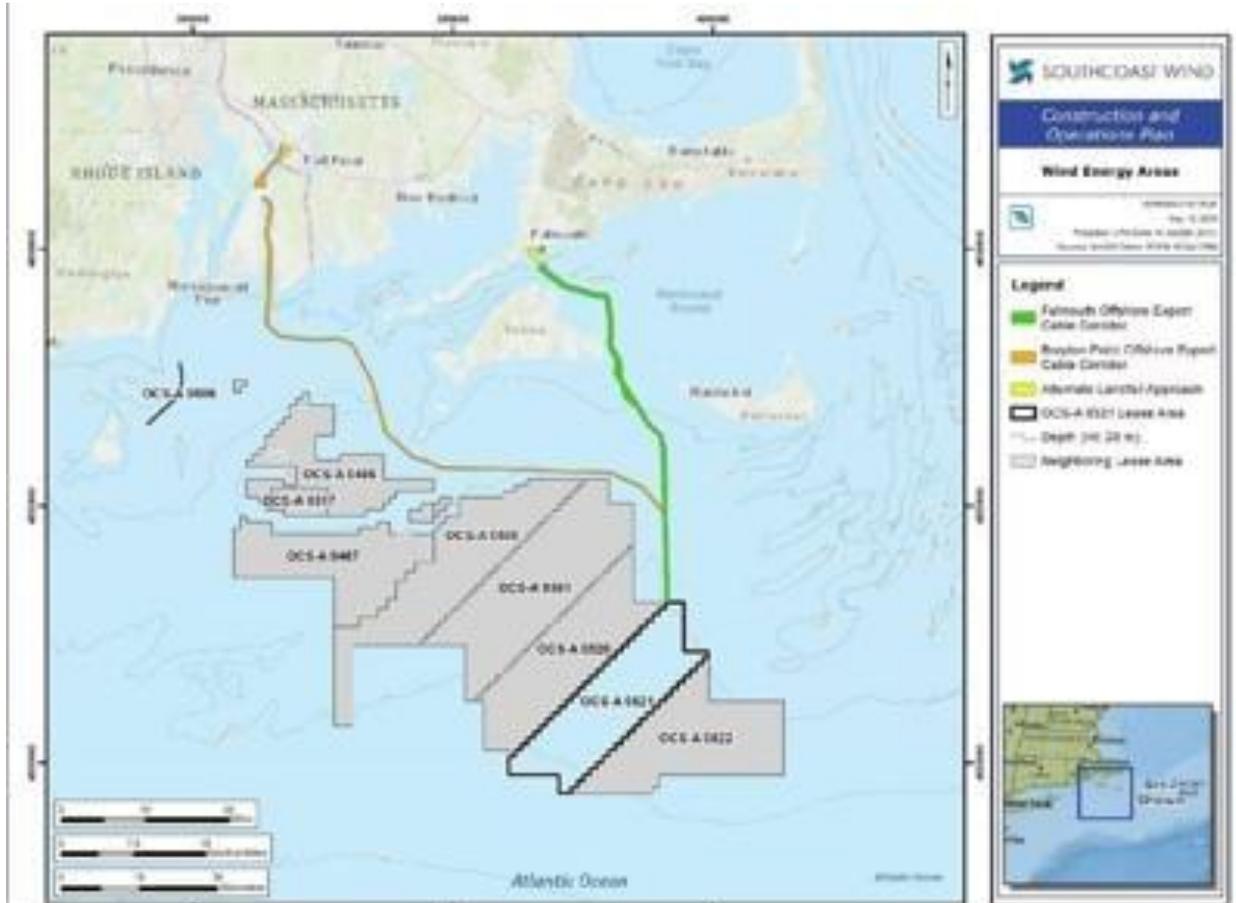


Feds reconsidering SouthCoast Wind approval, seek pause in Nantucket case

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This map shows the location of offshore wind projects south of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. The SouthCoast Wind lease area is the unshaded box marked OCS-A 0521.

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

(Sept. 4, 2025) The town is welcoming a federal review of the SouthCoast Wind offshore energy project, a move that could deliver the outcome it has been seeking in its lawsuit over what it has called a rushed and flawed approval.

The permit for SouthCoast Wind, granted in the final days of the Biden administration, is now being reconsidered under the Trump administration's markedly different approach to offshore wind.

According to a court filing from the U.S. Department of Justice Friday, federal officials have asked a judge to pause the town's case while the review is carried out. Town officials said they support putting the suit on hold.

"Nantucket supports renewable energy and recognizes that proper permitting and policy making for wind energy development rests in the hands of the federal government," Select Board member Brooke Mohr said in a statement. "But the permitting for SouthCoast Wind failed to account for the significant harm the project will cause Nantucket, a federally designated National Historic Landmark. We welcome this opportunity for federal agencies to reevaluate their decision and correct course."

SouthCoast Wind is a planned wind farm consisting of up to 141 turbines located 20 miles south of the island, each standing over 1,000 feet tall. It is a joint venture between Portuguese developer EDP Renewables and French utility company Engie, and has yet to begin construction.

The town's lawsuit, filed this March in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, claims that the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management failed to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act.

The town argues that because Nantucket is a National Historic Landmark, all possible efforts must be made to minimize adverse impacts to it and to appropriately mitigate any unavoidable effects.

The Justice Department's move comes amid a complete 180-degree turn in federal offshore wind policy from the Biden administration to the Trump administration.

In January, during his first days in office, President Trump issued an executive order blocking any new offshore wind leases and directing a review of existing approvals.

Since Trump took office BOEM has eliminated more than 3.5 million acres of ocean previously designated for wind energy development, and the federal Department of Transportation revoked \$679 million in funding allocated to a dozen offshore wind related projects.

In August BOEM issued a stop-work order, citing national security concerns, for the nearly completed Revolution Wind project off the coast of Connecticut and Rhode Island.

This latest salvo against SouthCoast Wind is another example of the administration's willingness to revisit and possibly roll back approvals issued during the Biden years, even as the developers like SouthCoast Wind say that delays could cost them hundreds of millions of dollars.

According to the town's latest press release, Nantucket officials repeatedly asked SouthCoast Wind to address concerns about the project's potential impact on the island's tourism-based economy and historic setting, but the developer instead "relied on BOEM to shield it from accountability."

When Nantucket raised the threat of billions of dollars in potential losses, the release said the company responded only with a consultant's report on the island's historic character.

Now, in opposing the federal government's motion for reconsideration, SouthCoast argues that any delay could cost it "hundreds of millions" of dollars.

"This response exemplifies the imbalance of risk perpetuated by flawed permitting: communities bear the consequences, while developers expect expedited approval with limited accountability," the town's release said.

Last fall, BOEM increased its offer to the town for compensation related to the SouthCoast Wind project from \$150,000 to \$300,000, along with a commitment to fund one of the town's coastal resilience projects within the next year.

Both the public and the Select Board unanimously rejected that offer during a public information session held in November.

"Going from \$150,000 to \$300,000 is laughable," Select Board member Dawn Holdgate said at the time. "I don't think they listened at all."

Greg Werkheiser, attorney at Cultural Heritage Partners, legal counsel to Nantucket for wind-energy development, added in the release, "This case illustrates the law of unintended consequences. If agencies shortcut environmental safeguards to fast-track green energy projects, they create a dangerous precedent that allows fossil fuel developers to do the same. The result is more – not less – environmental harm. Our position is simple: we must move swiftly toward clean energy while still honoring the rule of law and protecting vulnerable communities."