

OFFSHORE WIND

Maker of broken Vineyard Wind blade will pay Nantucket \$10.5 million

After the wind turbine blade broke a year ago, during peak summer tourist season, the town closed beaches to swimming out of safety concerns over fiberglass shards.

 By **Anastasia E. Lennon**
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Three wind turbines, including one with a damaged blade, at the Vineyard Wind offshore site in November 2024. Credit: Eleonora Bianchi / The New Bedford Light.



NANTUCKET — GE Vernova, the manufacturer of the faulty Vineyard Wind turbine blade that broke and washed onto Massachusetts shores one year ago, has agreed to pay the Town of Nantucket \$10.5 million to compensate for impacts to the town and local businesses during what was peak summer tourist season.

In the days after the blade broke on July 13, 2024, the town closed beaches to swimming out of safety concerns over fiberglass shards. A local surfing business told town officials in meetings that followed about cancelled lessons. Local officials, eventually with the assistance of company officials, engaged in beach cleanups.

Under the agreement, the town will establish a “Community Claims Fund” to be administered by a third party, which will review claims submitted for cleanups, property damage and lost profit, and dole out compensation.

“We are pleased to have reached a final settlement agreement with the Town of Nantucket to provide compensation for any impacted local businesses,” said a GE Vernova spokesperson in an email Friday.

Nantucket may use any funds not dispensed through the claims process “at its discretion in the public’s interest,” per the [17-page settlement](#).

The multi-million dollar settlement “finally and forever” releases GE Vernova, Vineyard Wind and the town from “any and all” claims and suits related to the 2024 blade incident. It also binds the Town of Nantucket in an agreement to not sue GE Vernova over the incident.

Notably, the town stated it “would not accept” Vineyard Wind as a signatory to the settlement, though Vineyard Wind still benefits from it.

“The Town has found Vineyard Wind wanting in terms of its leadership, accountability, transparency, and stewardship in the aftermath of the blade failure,” reads the town’s [FAQ page](#). Vineyard Wind is constructing the offshore wind farm about 15 miles south of Nantucket, using turbines built by GE Vernova.

The Light contacted both Vineyard Wind and the town Friday morning for clarification on whether Vineyard Wind requested to be a signatory on the settlement.

Vineyard Wind spokesperson Craig Gilvarg in a statement said the agreement “is the product of diligent, thorough, and cooperative negotiations between the parties over the past year.”



“Vineyard Wind appreciates the good faith, respectful, and productive approach demonstrated by GE Vernova and the Town of Nantucket, which was critical toward reaching this fair and conclusive settlement,” said Gilvarg in an email.

MassLive in October **reported that** settlement negotiations started with both GE Vernova and Vineyard Wind, and that lawyers from the town’s firm, Cultural Heritage Partners, were “at the table with executives and lawyers” from both companies.

As part of the agreement, people who are compensated through the claims process must agree to not sue either GE Vernova or Vineyard Wind regarding the incident as a condition of receiving payment.

“The cost of litigation for many individual claimants could exceed the amount of any financial losses incurred,” reads a FAQ page from the town. “The Community Claims Fund will provide an expeditious and no- to low-cost way for Nantucket residents and businesses to seek compensation.”

The agreement also includes a non-disparagement clause, meaning town officials may not speak negatively about GE Vernova regarding the blade break. However, they are “free to make accurate, good-faith public statements concerning the Incident and the settlement” and “to express concerns regarding the potential risks of future blade failures, or to comment on any related policy or implementation issues related to any offshore wind farm.”

The town seemed to signal news may be forthcoming regarding its relationship with Vineyard Wind, stating it is “intensely focused on securing greater protection” from possible impacts from the project “through the actions of others who can order changes to Vineyard Wind’s behavior.”

That may be a reference to federal regulators, which have taken significant action to slow or curtail the industry’s progress since President Donald Trump took office.

“The Select Board will have more to say on this topic over the following weeks,” the town’s page reads.

A GE Vernova spokesperson did not address a question from The Light on how often, if at all, the company had compensated other municipalities in response to issues with its land-based or offshore turbines.

Behind the broken blade

Vineyard Wind started installing its turbines **in September 2023**. After the blade failure, federal  **EN** shut down the wind farm’s construction and operations for months while officials investigated the cause.

GE Vernova late last year laid off nine managers and suspended 11 unionized floor workers at its LM Wind factory in Gaspé, Quebec, in **response to the defective blade that broke**. The Canadian plant had been manufacturing and supplying most of the blades for the Vineyard Wind project until the blade failure.

Managers at the LM Wind plant may have falsified quality testing data, according to a report from **local outlet Radio Gaspésie**. Citing anonymous sources, the radio station reported last year that executives at the LM Wind plant may have asked employees to falsify quality control data, favoring production quantity over quality.

GE Vernova said preliminary analysis showed the Vineyard Wind blade failure was caused by a manufacturing defect of **“insufficient bonding.”** Blades contain only a bit of steel (mostly in the form of bolts and plates at the blade root), so it’s the adhesive and resins that bond everything together.

In January, days before Trump took office, the Biden administration **lifted its suspension order**, allowing construction of Vineyard Wind to resume. As part of that agreement, Vineyard Wind and GE Vernova must remove blades from “a maximum of 22 wind turbine generators ... that were installed prior” to the July blade failure — more than a third of all turbine locations.

It’s been tough to track that progress.

Since Trump took office, Vineyard Wind has **fallen even more silent**, declining to comment or answer media questions, and redacting its maps that previously updated mariners on where turbine blades and towers were installed.

In April, the company extended its lease with the New Bedford staging terminal through mid-2026, The Light first reported, suggesting the project will not complete construction this year.

Around that time, before its **maps went dark**, Vineyard Wind had installed more than half of its 62 turbine towers. Of those, 23 had blades on them. However, it’s not clear how many blades are from France, which means that the turbine is completed, and how many are from the **troubled Canadian blade factory** (which means they must be **removed and replaced**, under a federal order).

Nantucket challenging another wind project

In February, Nantucket Select Board Chair Brooke Mohr **wrote to U.S. Interior Secretary Douglas Bursum**, requesting the federal government closely review SouthCoast Wind, another wind farm propo



town in its letter purported “legal errors” by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management in its permitting of the project. (SouthCoast Wind has three remaining permits that need federal approval.)

The following month, the town **sued the federal government**, requesting it “set aside” its approval of SouthCoast Wind. Nantucket wants the government to restart its environmental review — a process that took more than three years to complete and culminated in key permits.

“Offshore wind may bring benefits, but it also carries risks — to ocean health, to historic landscapes, and to the economies of coastal communities like Nantucket, known worldwide as an environmental and cultural treasure,” said Mohr in a prepared statement.

In its settlement, as well as its suit against the federal government, the town is being represented by Cultural Heritage Partners.

The Virginia-based firm is also representing the Preservation Society of Newport County, which owns the famed waterfront mansions, in its **challenges against** Revolution Wind and South Fork Wind, which are respectively under construction and completed. The society says the visibility of the turbines from the shore will obstruct the ocean views and have a lasting impact on Newport’s tourism economy.

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