



The Alliance to Protect Nantucket Sound

Mission

The Alliance to Protect Nantucket Sound is a 501(c)(3) non-profit environmental organization dedicated to the permanent preservation of Nantucket Sound, the historic body of water that lies between Cape Cod and the islands of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. The goal of the Alliance is to establish the Sound as a protected area to preserve its rich ecology and safeguard the Sound against future inappropriate development. Our supporters include environmentalists, fishing groups, tribal governments, business associations, municipalities, homeowners, offshore wind developers and others.

Background

The Alliance was formed in 2002 in response to Cape Wind's proposal to build a 25-square-mile wind energy project in the Sound. Our base of support grew quickly due to Cape Wind's adverse economic, environmental, and public safety impacts. For 15 years, the Alliance fought to stop this industrial development through education, grassroots advocacy, the regulatory process, lobbying and legal challenges. In 2017, Cape Wind surrendered its federal lease to 46-square miles of the Sound. The U.S. Department of the Interior formally accepted Cape Wind's lease surrender in 2018.

The Alliance also participated in the establishment of rules and regulations governing offshore wind energy development. When Cape Wind was first proposed in 2001, there was no leasing authority, federal planning or competitive bidding for wind sites in federal waters. In 2005, the Energy Policy Act established federal leasing and called for regulations to govern renewable energy, which were completed in 2009. The Alliance promoted marine spatial planning and the creation of development zones to encourage appropriate development and exclusion zones to protect the marine environment. In 2010, the federal government's "Smart from the Start" initiative led to the identification of specific areas to minimize conflicts, offshore lease sales and the progress of projects like Vineyard Wind in sites less conflicted than Nantucket Sound.

Next steps

While Cape Wind is no longer a threat, the federal waters of the Sound remain open to industrialization. The state waters, which extend 3 miles from the shores of Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, are protected under Massachusetts law, but the federal waters in the center are still vulnerable. Unless the Sound is permanently protected, it faces a future of industrial activity, especially as ocean-based technology develops. The 1961 establishment of the Cape Cod National Seashore safeguarded this exceptional place from a future of parking lots, hotels, and other development. The same must be done for Nantucket Sound to ensure it remains the national treasure it is today.

The Alliance is seeking federal legislation to designate Nantucket Sound a National Historic Landmark to recognize its historic, environmental and economic values, and to prohibit the federal government from authorizing industrial projects in the Sound. The Alliance has built a strong coalition of support to accomplish this goal. We have 75 stakeholders on board – including the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, municipal and tribal governments, historic preservation groups, commercial fishermen, environmental groups, and offshore wind developers. This diverse coalition is urging our delegation in DC to enact the "Nantucket Sound National Historic Landmark Act" bill to permanently protect the Sound.

Funding

The Alliance is the only group that is fighting to protect Nantucket Sound. As a non-profit, we rely solely on foundation support and private donations. We need funding in 2020 for lobbying, staff, and legal counsel in order to enact federal legislation to permanently protect the Sound's unique environment. Nantucket Sound won't stay a national treasure without your support. Please help protect this special body of water to leave a legacy for generations to come.

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