

Nantucket's rich protest proposed wind turbines

By Jennifer Peter
Associated Press

BOSTON | The rich and famous have long flocked to the beaches of Cape Cod and the island seclusion of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket — and want to make sure wind turbines don't become a part of the scenery.

They are fighting a proposed \$700 million wind farm in the Nantucket Sound that would provide electricity to thousands of homes in the area, saying the giant turbines will mar the landscape of one of the nation's most pristine areas.

Legendary newsman Walter Cronkite, a part-time resident of Martha's Vineyard, and Robert F. Kennedy Jr., whose famous political family has a compound in Hyannis, began campaigning against the renewable energy project last year.

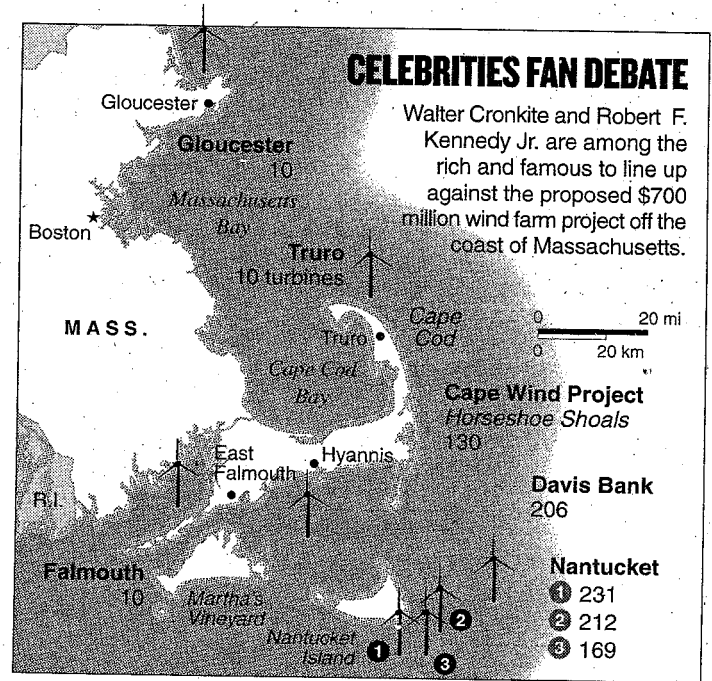
Pulitzer Prize-winning historian David McCullough recently jumped into the fray and can now be heard on one-minute radio spots decrying the project.

"I'm not against wind turbines," said Mr. McCullough, who has been a full-time resident of Martha's Vineyard for 30 years. "I'm against 130 of them over 400 feet tall right smack in the middle of one of the most beautiful places in America. That's a hundred feet taller than the Capitol dome in Washington."

Cape Wind Associates, the private company seeking a federal permit for the project, wants to put up 130 turbines in Nantucket Sound in what would be the nation's first offshore wind farm.

The turbines — 420 feet tall — would be about 3 miles off the coast and supply close to three-quarters of the electricity used on Cape Cod and the islands of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard.

The farm's proximity to exclu-



SOURCE: Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs

AP

sive summertime playgrounds has bred the familiar "not-in-my-backyard" charges from officials at Cape Wind Associates.

"If the government determines that this project is in the public interest, that ultimately is much more important than anyone's individual aesthetic opinion," Cape Wind spokesman Mark Rodgers said. "We would supply three-quarters of the electricity that Mr. McCullough will use in his home from a clean, renewable resource."

Mr. McCullough points out that he has no view of the Sound from his home and that he has become involved in projects far from his back yard. He helped derail Disney's proposed Civil War theme park near a Virginia battlefield a decade ago.

"I feel strongly about preserving the unspoiled places in America, no matter where they are," Mr. McCullough said. "That Sound, that beautiful place out there . . . is not just the back

yard of those of us who are blessed enough to live in this part of America, but to some five million people who come here from all over the world."

The wind farm has received mixed reviews from local residents, who have seen the project evolve into the hottest topic of the summer.

"It's good to see people talking, people active, people involved," said Erik Albert, innkeeper at Martha's Vineyard's Oak Bluffs Inn, which is a five-minute walk from the Sound.

As for Mr. Cronkite and Mr. McCullough, Mr. Albert said, "They are valued members of the community here and their opinions hold a lot of weight."

Opponents of the project say they are in favor of renewable energy, but just don't believe it should be allowed in this body of water at a time when there is no federal licensing process for this type of development on the ocean's floor.