

TUNE IN TO THE  
SOUND OF DEMOCRACY

## Justice Talking Radio Transcript

**Wind Power: The Wave of the Future?—Air Date: 8/7/06**

*The high price of gasoline and the international furor over global warming have pushed policymakers to look at alternative sources of energy that can reduce costs and alleviate U.S. dependence on foreign oil. Residents of Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket have been polarized by proposals for wind farms in the waters around the Massachusetts coast. A proposal to place 130 wind turbines in Nantucket Sound has the support of some business leaders and environmentalists, but others worry that the turbines will jeopardize the ecological balance in the region and threaten its tourism and fishing industries. On this edition of Justice Talking, we travel to Cape Cod, Massachusetts to debate wind power with listeners from the Cape and Islands NPR stations WCAI, WNAN and WZAI.*

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MARGOT ADLER: From NPR, this is Justice Talking. I'm Margot Adler. Wind farms are cropping up all across the country in deserts, on mountain tops and in valleys. The United States gets less than one percent of its energy from wind power, but many are looking to wind power as a viable renewable energy source. Coming to you from Cape Cod, Massachusetts, we'll look at the controversial proposal for an offshore wind farm in Nantucket Sound and we'll hear arguments for and against the plan.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We have designated by 2012 that we will have seven percent of our energy from renewable sources. And if we're to do that from wind, it will take 1,600 turbines the size of those proposed by Cape Wind.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I'd rather see 1,600 wind turbines than 1,600 coal plants. Wind is part of the answer for how we're going to solve global warming.

MARGOT ADLER: Wind power as a renewable energy and the politics of a proposed wind farm on Cape Cod in Massachusetts--more after the news. Stay with us.

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MARGOT ADLER: This is Justice Talking. I'm Margot Adler. You may have noticed wind farms are popping up all across America in deserts, on mountain tops and in valleys, and now there are several proposals for offshore wind farms. One is six miles off Cape Cod in Massachusetts, in the middle of Nantucket Sound. We visited the Cape and taped our show at the Chatham Bars Inn in Chatham, Massachusetts, at the invitation of the Cape and Island's NPR Stations. We'll talk about the Cape Cod wind farm debate later in the show, but first, to get some of the history of wind power and to find out how it works, I talked with Robert Righter. He is professor emeritus at the University of Texas at El Paso and the author of a book called "Wind Energy in America." I asked him what we mean when we use the term renewable energy.

ROBERT RIGHTER: I suppose as a historian I always think of renewable energy as something that is almost used before the industrial revolution. Water, wind, wood, animals and actually human power are all renewable energy.

MARGOT ADLER: And how would you define wind power?

ROBERT RIGHTER: Well, one analogy you might use is to think in terms of a fan. A fan uses electricity to create wind, correct? And the turbines or wind power does just the opposite; it uses wind to create electricity.

MARGOT ADLER: Now we're here on Cape Cod where a proposed wind farm is the source of significant controversy. We'll talk about that later in the show. Give us some perspective. When was wind power first used?

ROBERT RIGHTER: Wind power, I believe, at least on the water, I've read archeologists found evidence, in Melanesia, of using wind power 40,000 years ago. But in our own culture, more recent history, I think you can find on the Mediterranean, I think that you can find on the Nile River, 3,000 B.C., there was wind power there. The Greeks and the Romans. And, of course, in Greek mythology, Aeolus.

MARGOT ADLER: The god of the wind.

ROBERT RIGHTER: The god of the wind.

MARGOT ADLER: And the first use of wind power as an energy source really.

ROBERT RIGHTER: And the whole exploration of the New World from Europe was wind power. When you think about it we didn't have anything else. That's the way we got around. So that is an energy use. But I think that you're maybe are thinking in terms of terrestrial.

And there you have to go back to about the 7th Century in Persia, what is now Iran and the Sistine region, they started using not the kind of wind turbines that you're talking about here, but rather they're carousel types; they turn like a carousel, and they ground grain in the 7th Century.

MARGOT ADLER: Where are wind farms located around the country?

ROBERT RIGHTER: Well, windy regions. You can expect that. And if you look today at statistics from the American Wind Energy Association, almost all of the wind is produced-- California is number one, with over 2,100 megawatts, Texas is number two, and other Western states have a good deal of wind energy. So that's where most of the resource is.

MARGOT ADLER: And when we think about wind power around the world, which countries are actually doing the best?

ROBERT RIGHTER: Europe is doing by far the best these days. And the Danish, Denmark has a long tradition of wind energy; probably about 25 percent of their power now comes from the wind. And for over 100 years they've been developing wind turbines.

MARGOT ADLER: So here in the U.S., when did we start seeing the real development of wind farms?

ROBERT RIGHTER: Wind farms come about 1980. It really is a result of at least our questioning of nuclear energy by 1975, say. And that is combined with the OPEC Oil Embargo of 1973 and then '78 again. And all of a sudden we began interest in wind energy. Up to that point there was absolutely no federal incentive at all to develop wind energy.

MARGOT ADLER: Let's move for a moment to another subject, which is how the government subsidizes various energy sources including wind power.

ROBERT RIGHTER: Starting in about 1980, wind power was subsidized by the federal government in a tax credit of about 25 percent. Also the reason it grew so quickly in California was California also gave another 25 percent. And so that created a tremendous boom in California because of those subsidies. Today, the government continues to give a tax credit of, I believe, 1.8 cents per kilowatt hour produced.

MARGOT ADLER: And, of course, other energy sources are subsidized. ROBERT RIGHTER: That's right. I think nuclear power between 1955 and 64 was subsidized to the tune of 27 billion, billion dollars.

MARGOT ADLER: So what do you think is the future for wind power?

ROBERT RIGHTER: I think the future is very great. It is the fastest-growing source of renewable energy in the world today. But I think that it's not going to be everywhere for everyone. These folks here in Cape Cod live in a beautiful area. I spend my summers in a beautiful area too, in Jackson Hole. I have a cabin that looks out along to the Grand Tetons.

I do not necessarily want a wind turbine in front, to view that. So we're going to have to be selective and we're going to have to make compromises in terms of where we put wind turbines.

MARGOT ADLER: Robert Righter is a professor emeritus at the University of Texas, El Paso and the author of "Wind Energy in America." Thank you so much for talking with us.

ROBERT RIGHTER: Thank you.

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MARGOT ADLER: There's been a lot of controversy about the proposed wind farm off the coast of Cape Cod, Massachusetts, in the middle of Nantucket Sound. If built, the wind farm would be the first offshore development of its kind in the United States. It's a divisive issue on the Cape, with everyone from Senator Ted Kennedy to local fishermen weighing in. Reporter Rachel Gotbaum has this report.

RACHEL GOTBAUM: Ron Borgenson is leaving Hyannis Harbor on his fishing boat, the Anginette. Borgenson has been a commercial fisherman in these waters for 35 years.

RON BORGENSON: We're heading outside the inner harbor, down towards Horseshoe Shoal, and that's where the majority of the commercial fishing takes place in Nantucket Sound.

RACHEL GOTBAUM: On the way to Horseshoe Shoal, the Anginette passes some of the most exclusive real estate on Cape Cod.

RON BORGENSON: Well, of course, here's the yacht club over here, the Hyannis Yacht Club. Ahead of us is Great Island. That is owned by the Melons of banking fame.

RACHEL GOTBAUM: This is where the country's first offshore wind farm is being proposed. Thirty wind turbines raising more than 400 feet high would spread across 24 miles in Nantucket Sound. The idea is to generate wind-powered electricity on Cape Cod. But Borgenson says the turbines will put an end to his long fishing career here.

RON BORGENSON: We can't tow the gear through where the towers are going to be. They're just too close together. And if you put two or three different boats, or four boats or as many as 40 boats into the mix, it's like trying to fit 60 cars in a two-car garage.

RACHEL GOTBAUM: Nantucket Sound's Horseshoe Shoal, with its shallow water and high winds, is considered a perfect location for the powerful wind turbines. In summer, Nantucket Sound is also filled with boaters and tourists who travel on the ferries back and forth from the mainland to the islands of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard. Cape Cod is home to about 225,000 year-round residents. But in the high season, that number more than triples as vacationers flock here.

BILL RIPKA: There's a great potential for a collision and for loss of life if the windmills are put in Nantucket Sound.

RACHEL GOTBAUM: Bill Ripka is a former Coast Guard pilot. For six years he flew over Nantucket Sound rescuing boaters. He says because the turbines are so high, rescue planes would not be able to fly in to find people.

BILL RIPKA: The Coast Guard pilots are not going to be able to get in the area to search for people, to search for boats that may run into the windmills in the middle of the fog.

RACHEL GOTBAUM: Ripka and Borgenson are part of a vocal opposition to the Cape Wind Power project. The list also includes Senator Ted Kennedy, whose family residence, known as the Kennedy Compound, looks out onto Nantucket Sound. Kennedy has fought hard in Congress to derail the plan. He and the other opponents argue that placing wind turbines in the middle of this busy waterway will not only be hazardous to boaters and hurt commercial fisher gear, but will also kill off fish and other sea life. Proponents say these concerns have been addressed by years of study required by the project sponsor, Cape Wind Associates.

JIM GORDON: This project is going to peacefully co-exist with the existing uses of Nantucket Sound.

RACHEL GOTBAUM: That's Jim Gordon. He's president of Cape Wind. Gordon says that the turbines will cover a tiny portion of Nantucket Sound and will be placed six to nine football fields apart, allowing fishermen to drag their nets into the area.

JIM GORDON: By placing it on a shallow shoal, away from the ferry routes, away from the flight paths, outside of the main shipping channels, we're going to be able to operate in a way that does not conflict with the existing uses of Nantucket Sound.

RACHEL GOTBAUM: Cape Codders get most of their electricity from an oil-burning power plant on Cape Cod Canal. Gordon says his wind power project will provide 75 percent of the Cape's electricity without pollution or dependence on foreign oil.

JIM GORDON: You just have to look at the impacts of renewable energy versus the fossil fuel plants that are currently raining down pollutant emissions in the form of mercury, greenhouse emissions that represent the greatest threat to marine and avian species. Cape Wind is really about environmental stewardship.

RACHEL GOTBAUM: Several major environmental groups support Cape Wind, including Greenpeace, the Sierra Club and the National Resources Defense Council. But some state and federal agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency, have raised questions about the possible environmental impacts of the \$700 million project. Mark Weisman lives in Mashpee on the Cape. He is a member of the Massachusetts Marine Fisheries Commission, a governor-appointed group that is critical of the Wind Farm proposal.

MARK WEISMAN: We don't know how that's going to affect the species that are there, how these changes could ripple out up and down the East Coast.

RACHEL GOTBAUM: President Bush has just signed legislation giving the Coast Guard the authority to determine whether placing wind turbines in Nantucket Sound will cause navigational and other safety problems. In the meantime, 16 other state and federal agencies are conducting another review of the possible environmental impact of the Cape Wind proposal. A final decision by the Department of the Interior is expected in late 2007. For Justice Talking, I'm Rachel Gotbaum.

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MARGOT ADLER: Coming up, more of our debate on wind power. One argument against the Cape Cod wind farm is that birds would die after getting caught in the wind turbines. But the Massachusetts Audubon Society says that won't happen.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We really think that the birds are going to be okay here and in the long run that it's going to be much better for the environment to have this clean renewable energy and that is the wave of the future.

MARGOT ADLER: Birds, bats and other things that are caught up in the politics of the proposed wind farm in Nantucket Sound--stay with us, don't go away.

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MARGOT ADLER: This is Justice Talking. I'm Margot Adler. We're debating the controversial offshore wind farm proposal in Nantucket Sound. We taped this show in Cape Cod, Massachusetts at the Chatham Bars Inn. I was joined by John Passacantando, executive director of Greenpeace USA, and Jerry Taylor, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, who debated wind power and the Cape Cod proposal. Let's get to our debate and our audience at the Chatham Bars Inn, many of whom had strong opinions about the proposed wind farm.

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MARGOT ADLER: The United States is reliant on foreign oil and our projected energy needs are increasing. With gas prices rising, don't we have to look at renewable energy as a key part of our nation's energy policy? John, you first.

JOHN PASSACANTANDO: Well, we need to look at renewable energy both because of our nation's dependence on foreign energy sources, which get us tangled up in these ugly foreign wars, but the even more pressing concern is what we're seeing from global warming. So the burning of fossil fuels is changing our very climate. And a child born today is likely to in his or her lifetime see the extinction of the polar bears, to see the vanishing of islands, perhaps see the vanishing of some coastal cities. So we are changing our very world, and to slow that down we need to really boost up our energy from renewable energy.

MARGOT ADLER: Jerry Taylor, renewable energies as a key part of our nation's energy policy, yes or no?

JERRY TAYLOR: Right now renewable energies are the main reason why we're paying high gasoline prices at the pump. I mean, right now we have a mandate from this Congress to use four billion gallons of ethanol every year in this country. That's increased pump prices by eight to 60 cents a gallon, depending upon where you are. Higher prices, if you're in states which have formulative fuel mandates, in other words essentially blue states, big urban areas are seeing a major increase in prices, because of our embrace of renewable energy. It's less costly in say red states, the more rural parts of the country, but when we're looking at wind, this has nothing to do with anything, because you could build 100 wind mills and it's not going to reduce oil consumption a drop. That's because we use oil for transportation, we use wind to generate electricity, and we use virtually no oil to generate electricity. So unless we're going to put a wind turbine on the trunk of your car, it's not going to make any difference. It has nothing to do with oil dependency, nothing to do with energy independence or anything of the kind.

MARGOT ADLER: John, wind power, what do you think?

JOHN PASSACANTANDO: I'd like to clarify on some of these. You know the example of the proposed wind farm for the Cape and Islands would supplant a tremendous amount of oil that is burned to provide energy for the people on the Cape and Islands. But it is true that our electricity comes to a great degree from the burning of coal. But there are other costs associated with the burning of coal. You've got an estimated 24,000 premature deaths a year from the emissions from our old-coal fired powered plants, 24,000. You've got 500,000 cases of asthma a year from the pollution from those plants. Yes, wind energy can supplant some of that, and we need to be pushing that everywhere we possibility can, everywhere we environmentally can.

MARGOT ADLER: Jerry, wind power used to be pretty expensive, certainly a pretty expensive investment. But as the technology has improved, it's gotten cheaper. Isn't it becoming a more attractive energy option?

JERRY TAYLOR: It certainly has gotten cheaper over the years. There's no doubt about that. But it's an attractive energy option because of the tax breaks and the subsidies. About a year and a half year ago at a panel the American Bar Association sponsored where they brought together people who were financiers and law firms who put together these deals, a presentation was made in which the partner of the firm said look, two-thirds of the value of these wind projects are tied up in the federal tax breaks. Only about a third of it comes from the actual value of the plan itself. So these were essentially big tax shelters. Now that might not always be the case. But right now the only reason there's a single turbine in the United States is because of the preferences, the subsidies and the mandate of production orders. And you can embrace that or not embrace that. But the fact is the contention that wind is being embraced by the market, because the economics are looking good, that's just nonsense. The tax policies look good, the subsidies look very attractive. And that's what's attracting the investment.

MARGOT ADLER: I want to take up this issue of subsidies. Jerry, first of all, do you believe that all subsidies are equally bad? I mean, I'm looking at the government subsidies and tax breaks to other energy sources--4.3 billion for nuclear power, 2.8 billion for fossil fuel production, 1.6 billion for investments in clean coal facilities. Isn't subsidizing renewal energy just beginning to level the playing field?

JERRY TAYLOR: I'm opposed to subsidies across the board. The difference between John and me is I'm opposed to corporate welfare period, not dependent upon whether I like the corporation or whether they do good things, bad things, or give to Cato. John likes some corporate welfare, if you're doing good corporate things and they're making things John likes, but he doesn't like some other kinds of corporate welfare. I'm against it. I don't think the government should be propping any of these industries up; they should compete on their own merits. But when it comes to these other energy sources, let's be real here. If wind energy sources have value and two-thirds of that value is because of the tax break, do you think that whatever tax breaks are there for the oil and gas industry would eliminate that industry if they were removed? Of course not. The reason the subsidies are important is only to the extent to which they affect price. A lot of these subsidies, which I don't like, and I've written against, like the clean coal programs, don't affect the price of coal; they're just wealth transfers from tax payers to coal companies. They don't reduce coal production costs. Therefore they don't affect consumer prices. Therefore they do not handicap wind investment in the marketplace. I'm for getting rid of all of those. But this idea that if we had a level playing field that the wind energy sources would be able to compete isn't even embraced by the American Wind Energy Association, who refused to sign onto this position that Dan Becker and I at the Sierra Club have put in front of them.

MARGOT ADLER: So John, let's assume wind power, non-polluting...how do we guarantee that wind farms will produce energy when we need it? After all, you know, it's dependent on weather, environmental factors. Isn't it dangerous to depend on an energy source that's so unreliable?

JOHN PASSACANTANDO: Of course it would be, and wind is only part of the answer. You know when I look at how we are going to solve global warming, it's like 1939 and somebody saying: How do we solve problem of Adolph Hitler? The answer wasn't a bigger navy, the answer wasn't tanks, the answer wasn't an infantry, the answer wasn't paratroopers, it was everything. It was women going to work in the factories, children were recycling. Everybody was involved in all ways. That's what it's going to take in global warming. Wind power, where we can put it in, where there are great sources of wind, offshore wind in particular, in places where it's not environmentally sensitive is part of the answer. It's a very important part of the answer. But there is no single stroke that will solve global warming. I just think this particular issue of wind power, offshore in the United States, is going to be a major contributor to renewable energy.

MARGOT ADLER: This is Justice Talking. We're talking about wind power and we have a question from our audience.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hi, my name is Shane. I live in Woods Hole. I was wondering if either of the guests could address how due to the way energy is bid onto the grid, even coal, nuclear plants, only provide power for so long at a guaranteed level, and due to the fact that wind is, it might be over a long period unreliable, but over a short period we can predict it, couldn't wind farms bid into the grid much like coal and oil and nuclear plants do for a short period of time and then once the wind stops blowing other energy sources would bid in?

JERRY TAYLOR: The problem is you can reasonably predict wind a few hours out but that's about it. The second problem is very fundamental. We have plenty of baseload electricity in this country, the stuff that we need for general every day use. Where we are short of electricity in most parts of this country is the electricity we need on a hot summer day, that's called "peaking facilities." And wind gives us most of its power at night and during the winter. That's when we get most of that electricity. Well, we've got plenty of power then, we don't need any more electricity at night and during the winter. We need electricity on a hot summer day when peak loads go up tremendously. And that's when wind is able to produce the least, which is why it's not very attractive to utilities or to power companies, because when they're looking at investments now they're looking at things that they can call up on a July afternoon at three p.m. when all of a sudden there's a surge of air conditioners and that stuff's got to come on. And if it can't, they're not going to be able to get it out of wind, they're going to have to go somewhere else.

JOHN PASSACANTANDO: Jerry, you just said that wind energy isn't very attractive to the power companies and utilities. That's absolutely wrong. And you have great interest--

JERRY TAYLOR: Because of the subsidies they love it.

JOHN PASSACANTANDO: Excuse me, you have great interest in wind power by various private ventures and by utility companies.

MARGOT ADLER: John, I'm wondering...Patrick Moore, one of the founders of your organization, Greenpeace USA, recently said in the Washington Post that wind and solar power have their place, but because they are intermittent and unpredictable, they can't replace big baseload plants, such as coal, nuclear and hydroelectric. Do you agree?

JOHN PASSACANTANDO: Well, we have the big baseload plants, so the point is how do we move into the future? And we need to move into the future with the greatest percentage of renewal energy as we can to protect our planet, to protect our children, to protect our ecosystems from global warming. Patrick Moore is a very tragic case within Greenpeace because he is one of the great and brave founders who sailed into a nuclear test. But since then Patrick Moore decided to really be a corporate PR person for the industry and he's paid by the nuclear industry to say these things. And it's quite a sad thing for people who work at Greenpeace.

JERRY TAYLOR: If I can for a minute: Listening to John's talk about the need to do something about global warming and how that's the overriding concern and all of our energy choices have to be driven by it and we need to look at zero-emitting sources, that's a speech I hear from the nuclear power industry every single day in Washington, D.C. That's how they justify their subsidies. You can take the same speech that we've been hearing from John and plug it into a pro-nuclear talk for all that matters.

JOHN PASSACANTANDO: It doesn't make the ecological impacts that are coming untrue, Jerry.

JERRY TAYLOR: My point is that we shouldn't be predicting 20 years from now what the right best energy source will be. Any carbon constraint...well, the best way to go about this is to slap a tax on the economy to reflect the cost of global warming if we can arrive at some sort of agreement about what the damages might be and then let the market sort it out. And if we leave the decisions to them as opposed to politicians and we don't have a big fight regarding whose lobbyists are tougher--the nuclear lobbyists, the wind lobbyists or the coal lobbyists--we're likely to get a better answer.

MARGOT ADLER: Let's go back into the audience, where we have another question here on Justice Talking.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hi, my name is Chuck Kleecamp. I live in Sandwich here on Cape Cod. How can you say wind, whose fuel cost is zero, can't compete with oil and natural gas, which set the clearing price 80 percent of the time in New England?

MARGOT ADLER: Jerry, I think that's for you.

JERRY TAYLOR: Well, I can't speak for New England. Nationally, only about two percent of our electricity comes from oil and only about one percent of all oil is dedicated to electricity generation in the United States. So some regions are going to be higher and some regions are going to be lower, but nationally that's the picture.

MARGOT ADLER: So Jerry, who do you think benefits financially from wind power--shareholders, consumers?

JERRY TAYLOR: Well, people who make wind power for a living and people who invest in wind power. It's a tax shelter. So anybody who's got tax liabilities that they can dump into a wind facility is going to do pretty good. If you're looking at the wind power companies themselves, it's not Bobby and Sue Cream Cheese who's a member of Greenpeace somewhere locally, it's GE. You know where GE got its turbines? Enron. Mitsubishi's a big manufacturer, BP is a big investor. So wind is corporate America.

MARGOT ADLER: John, how do you answer that?

JOHN PASSACANTANDO: Well, you know, the people of the states speak when they say we want a renewable portfolio standard in our states. We want more renewable energy in our states. That is public policy. That's democracy working, mandating that a certain amount, a certain percentage of the energy in that state be from renewable sources. That's a beautiful thing. Jerry harkens back to a time that never existed when there's some kind of, there's no subsidies and corporations are just out there sort of playing in the field every day for the lowest cost and maximizing this and maximizing that. That's a very cold world and it's an extremely polluted world. We need regulation. I want the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act. I want the Kyoto Protocol to regulate and drive down the amount of carbon in the air.

MARGOT ADLER: John Passacantando, executive director of Greenpeace USA. You're also listening to Jerry Taylor, senior fellow at the Cato Institute. Now John, some environmentalists

say that wind power may be renewable, but it's not green, because the turbines can kill bats and birds. Here in Cape Cod that concern has been raised by opponents of the wind farm proposal in Nantucket Sound. Here's Ted Clark with the Massachusetts Audubon Society.

TED CLARK: Mass. Audubon went into this looking for scientific conclusions and things based on the research, based on science. We really think that the birds are going to be okay here and in the long run it's going to be much better for the environment to have this clean renewable energy and that is the wave of the future. And if it's not going to affect the birds, we don't see a reason not to have it.

MARGOT ADLER: Despite the conclusions about the Cape Wind proposal by the Massachusetts Audubon Society, we do know that birds do get killed in wind farms, we do know that bats get killed. Isn't the loss of birds and bats a significant concern?

TED CLARK: Well, it's certainly something that has to be paid attention to and it's something that's been studied with this wind farm and with others. And it's part of the decision-making process as to whether or not a wind farm is well sited or not. Some of the early wind farms were ill-placed, used blades that spun faster, had ladders and other types of things on the actual turbine pole that birds were then nesting on, making it very dangerous. As it turns out, now well-sited modern wind turbines kill very few birds, particularly compared to the other sources of bird deaths, which is basically housecats.

MARGOT ADLER: Skyscrapers.

TED CLARK: Followed by skyscrapers and other types of towers. But housecats are the big killers. If you're really worried about birds you should be rooting for the coyotes.

MARGOT ADLER: Jerry, earlier this year Whole Foods Markets, a grocery store that does a lot of organic food, bought enough wind power credits to cover all of its stores and buildings in the U.S. If more private industry took the lead on investing in green energy, would renewables become a more viable market?

JERRY TAYLOR: Well, obviously. There are a lot of things that people will buy that make economic sense, but they do it because it makes them feel good or because it allows them to get bragging rights of some sort. And for Whole Foods it allows them to appeal to a market that likes to think they're buying green and maybe it's a good investment for Whole Foods, I'm not going to second guess it. After all, I know a lot of very rich people in Aspen I've met who brag about the solar panels they have on their house. They're outside of the reach of normal wage-earners like me and they still use more energy than most lesser developed countries. But by gosh, they got that solar panel.

MARGOT ADLER: John, the green energy that Whole Foods purchased didn't actually power their stores, it doesn't power their stores, it simply pumps more wind energy into the grid, correct? So it's not like Whole Foods has installed solar panels on all of its stores. What actual impact does such an investment really have?

JOHN PASSACANTANDO: Well, it drives more money into renewable energy. And if it works for them as a marketing tool, it will drive other companies to do that. And then other companies are seeing the signal, if it works for Whole Foods they're finding that there's a market of people, those of us out there who say we want to support a company that is going to pay for renewable energy.

MARGOT ADLER: This is Justice Talking. I'm Margot Adler. You've been listening to Jerry Taylor of the Cato Institute and John Passacantando from Greenpeace USA. Coming up, we'll hear what environmentalist Bill McKibben thinks about a proposal of a wind farm in the middle of one of his favorite places, the Adirondack Mountains in New York State.

BILL MCKIBBEN: A couple of years ago a developer announced plans to build ten large wind turbines on the Adirondack ridge above the house where I've spent most of my life. And so the moment I heard of the plan I felt punched in the gut.

MARGOT ADLER: Don't go away.

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MARGOT ADLER: This is Justice Talking. I'm Margot Adler. We recently hosted a debate on wind power and the controversial offshore wind farm proposal in Nantucket Sound. We taped the show in Chatham, Massachusetts in Chatham Bars Inn, at the invitation of the Cape and Island's NPR stations. I was joined by John Passacantando, executive director of Greenpeace USA, and Jerry Taylor, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute. Let's return to our debaters and our Cape Cod audience.

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MARGOT ADLER: Oil refineries, landfills, power plants--they often end up in poor communities. But wind farms can only end up where the wind is and that's often in beautiful places. So how do both of you think that class, let's get the word right out there, class, socioeconomics in other words, plays into these controversies?

JERRY TAYLOR: Some, but it's not as clear as you think. For instance, in the New York Times the other day there was an interesting article about how communities in Louisiana and Texas compete to get expansions and refining capacities in their neighborhoods. Because that's jobs and tax revenues for relatively poor areas in the country. That might not be something that the Cape Cod communities would be interested in doing, but poorer communities are more interested in that sort of thing. But you're absolutely right. The problem with wind as a source of energy down the road is that it has to be in places where the wind's blowing. These tend to be scenic places, they tend to be unsettled places, rural places, places which generally have an aesthetic pull on a lot of us. And the people who live there oftentimes now are relatively rich people, because they like the scenery, they like the view. And that's why increasingly you're going to see, I think, more and more controversies where wind is finding itself with a somewhat cool reception from the neighborhood.

MARGOT ADLER: John, class.

JOHN PASSACANTANDO: Yes, well, I've been involved in a lot of environmental fights, but when I got involved in this big wind fight off of Massachusetts, I have to say that I have never run into the kind of opposition that I have here once the issue became about the views of the very rich. I've never seen so much money pumped into the opposition, pumped into lobbying. It's quite impressive. And what I hope we can get to, down the road, once these things are built, that people will see wind turbines, these little tiny things, the size of their thumbnail, of their outstretched arm on the horizon, they'll see a wind turbine out in the ocean as a sign of hope.

MARGOT ADLER: This is Justice Talking. I'm Margot Adler. And we've clearly begun to move into the Cape Wind controversy right here. And before we get into more of that, into more audience questions and comments, I'd like to bring in two people who are in our audience who represents both sides of this controversy. I would like to start with Mark Rogers of Cape Wind Associates.

MARK ROGERS: Hi, my name is Mark Rogers. I'm communications director of Cape Wind. I live and work on Cape Cod. My question for you John is the Department of Energy says that the future for offshore winds can be particularly important off the coast of the New England and the mid-Atlantic states, where they expect in a time horizon of 10 to 20 years, deep water sites will see thousands of offshore wind turbines, quite far from shore, probably where you can't see them. And they say that that era will be accelerated if now we do some projects like Cape Wind closer to shore to provide the experience in this region in that form of energy production. My question is does that comport with how Greenpeace sees it and what role do you see Cape Wind playing in America's energy future development?

JOHN PASSACANTANDO: Sure. Thank you. Greenpeace decided to get involved in this Cape Wind fight. We watched it for a number of years and then we saw it passing environmental muster by I think it was 16, or maybe 17 state and federal agencies. We said okay, this one's clean, this is a good one. And given that it's the first large offshore wind project proposed for U.S. waters, it is the signal, it's the signal to the wind industry and it's the signal to the investors of whether or not this is viable. If something like this can be defeated because a handful of super-wealthy people come in and say I'm going to stop this because I don't want this in my viewscape, then it's a signal that this is not a safe investment. All investments have risks. But if there's a political risk, if people can back-door through politicians and undermine something in the dark of night, then it tells people that this isn't a real industry, there's too many dangers here. So we wanted to see this one work, this one go through, those wind turbines as a sign of hope out there on Horseshoe Shoal as a sign, as the very first start of this offshore industry for the United States.

MARGOT ADLER: Jerry, did you have any comment?

JERRY TAYLOR: Those windmills would be a sign of hope that what's good for the goose is good for the gander. I mean, I'm not an advocate of the project in particular, but if the Kennedy's, for instance, want to endorse tax subsidies and preferences and mandates for wind

power for everybody else, poetic justice and karma simply demands that all of them be put outside their compound.

MARGOT ADLER: At this point I'd also like to go to Charles Vinic. He's here from the Alliance to Protect Nantucket Sound. And so we would like to go to you for a moment.

CHARLES VINIC: Thank you. Charles Vinic, the president of the Alliance to Protect Nantucket Sound here on Cape Cod. My question really to both of you is if under Massachusetts law as it is today we have designated by 2012 that we will have seven percent of our energy from renewable sources, and if we are to get that from wind it will take 1,600 turbines the size of those proposed by Cape Wind, how can we do that with offshore wind today?

MARGOT ADLER: Who of our guests...John, did you want to take that first?

JOHN PASSACANTANDO: Charles, I'd rather see 1,600 wind turbines than 1,600 coal plants. Wind is part of the answer for how we're going to solve global warming. The wind farm has to pass environmental muster. It's important for us to look at that. Greenpeace doesn't support wind farms everywhere, anywhere. They have to pass muster. And when they do, we think they're an extremely important part of the puzzle to solve this wicked storm coming on us called global warming.

MARGOT ADLER: Jerry? JERRY TAYLOR: This is actually very delicious for me, because here we have an issue where a local community does not want industrial development. And they're worried that on public lands industry may destroy a sensitive ecosystem, it may destroy the aesthetic beauty of an area all for profit and for an energy corporation. And we have Greenpeace complaining about the nimbies and about the people going through the back door to shut down investment, defending the investment. Denigrating the fact that it's aesthetically unattractive, denigrating the fact that it's a marine sanctuary, there's anything worth worrying about environmentally here. And here you've got the libertarian who's actually saying look, the individuals in that community probably should have a say about how the public lands around them are being used.

MARGOT ADLER: Well, I think at this point-- That was Jerry Taylor from the Cato Institute, and we're here on Justice Talking, talking about wind power. Let's go into our audience and get some comments.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hi. Liz Argo. I'm founder of Clean Power Now. We are a renewables group, grassroots group supporting renewable energy. And we have been to Denmark twice, and, of course, studied their model over there thoroughly. I'd like to know, with Jerry's somewhat skeptical view of our procedures, looking at the Denmark model where they have subsidies in order to get their technology up and running, if we don't have the subsidies and it's just zero, a level playing field for everybody, how will we...what do you propose to get the industry started here?

JERRY TAYLOR: Denmark's an interesting point. Denmark has the population of about Cook County, Illinois. It's got the square mileage of New Hampshire and Vermont about. To get 40

percent of your electricity or whatever from wind in a small place like that is not that great a trick. To get 300 million people that kind of electricity in the county the size of the United States is an entirely different thing. Europe has a long history of finding industries to subsidize and prop up. It's one of the reasons that Europe also has a long history of flat economic growth and high prices for things. I'm not sure it's a model that we necessarily want to embrace. I think the right way to go about this is if we want to address carbon emissions and carbon consumption, the right way to go about it is to figure out what the costs of these emissions are, reflect it in a tax, impose it on the economy and then let market investors decide what makes sense under that regime. It may be wind, it may be nuke, it may be clean coal, it may be natural gas replacing coal. I don't know. But when the government's going to arbitrarily step in and say I pick you as the winner... Let me make one thing very clear to you: Living in Washington, D.C. now for 20 years, that decision will be based on politics, it won't be based on economics, it won't be based on the environment, it won't be based on the ecology. It will be based on a cold political calculation regarding how many votes you gain from making that choice versus other choices. And only by the sheerest of chance will that be a good choice. And I think that's a bad way to run a railroad.

JOHN PASSACANTANDO: I believe there's one thing wrong with Jerry's argument, because I'm not a big fan of the way politics is done in Washington either, but the politicians, they're not looking at their votes when they're making these decisions, they're looking at who pays them. So the coal industry, the oil industry, the auto industry has the energy sector rigged the way it is based on the contributions that they make to your politicians, to my politicians, it's not about our desires for cleaner air. So he's making this argument about somehow we could have this pure system without subsidies--I'd love to see it. But I'm telling you those big and most-polluting industries are the guys that are paying for these campaigns and they own that town of ours down there.

MARGOT ADLER: This is Justice Talking. I'm Margot Adler. We're talking about wind power. Is it the wave of the future? With John Passacantando of Greenpeace USA and Jerry Taylor of the Cato Institute. And we'd like to take another question from our audience here.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes, my name is Cliff Carol. I'm actually the founder of windstop.org. Very quickly John, you said the project is going to be very small. It actually covers an area about the size of the island of Manhattan. The towers are 43 stories tall. They're going to put 40,000 gallons in the middle of our fishing grounds. When you came in last summer with your foreign-flagged boat you were surrounded by local fishermen who were going to be closed out of those fishing grounds and a lot of other local supporting people who are not rich. We make our living from the waters here. Seventy-five percent of the Cape Cod economy is tourist-based. You mentioned that this fight is with rich people. I would like to know how much money Greenpeace is receiving from the wind farm industry.

JOHN PASSACANTANDO: We don't take any corporate money, zero. We don't take any government money, zero. Little people support Greenpeace. About three million people around the world, that's who supports Greenpeace. We're completely independent.

MARGOT ADLER: I know there are many, many more questions out there and comments out there, but unfortunately we do have to wrap up. John Passacantando and Jerry Taylor, thanks for a great discussion. John Passacantando is the executive director of Greenpeace United States. Jerry Taylor is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute. Thanks for joining us. I'm Margot Adler. Thank you so much.

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MARGOT ADLER: Environmentalist and author Bill McKibben has been thinking a lot lately about wind power, especially since a wind farm was proposed to be built in one of his favorite places in the wilds of New York State.

BILL MCKIBBEN: A couple of years ago, a developer announced plans to build ten large wind turbines on the Adirondack ridge above the house where I've spent most of my life. These would be big turbines, Statue of Liberty big, and they would perch on the edge of the wilderness where I've spent many of the happiest and the most fruitful hours of my life. And so the moment I heard of the plans I felt punched in the gut. I understand why so many people along so many coasts and ridgelines are fighting against wind power. In the best of all worlds we don't need any more industrial intrusion into what's left of our rural landscape.

But this is far from the best of possible worlds. And since I've spent my life studying and writing about global warming, it didn't take me long to revise my opinion of those wind turbines above my forest. I love those woods. But the things I love most about them, the bears up in the beech trees, the leaves changing color in the fall, the mantle of ice that turns winter silent and splendid, those things are far more threatened by the intrusion of climate change than by the shadow of the wind towers. Unless we do everything we can possibly think of, hybrid cars and carbon taxes and compact fluorescent light bulbs and smaller homes and local food, and, yes, windmills, unless we do all those things the world that we've known is going to change in ways that we can only begin to imagine.

I spend a lot of time talking with climate scientists and I can tell you that in the past year, as new data on everything from hurricanes to icecaps has emerged, they've become steadily more shaken, more pessimistic and more driven to demand change. James Hanson, the great NASA climatologist, said earlier this year that we have a decade, no more, to start reducing the global use of fossil fuel or else we will inhabit a completely different planet. And that job will be immensely difficult, not at least because the poor countries of the world are finally starting to burn coal and oil and gas in appreciable quantities. We have our work cut out for us.

Which means, I think, that any reasonable alternative energy proposal deserves not a free pass, but at least the benefit of the doubt. And it means that we're going to have to learn to look a little differently at things, to glance up at the turbine turning slowly in the wind and see it not as an ugly affront, but as a small symbol of our willingness to take responsibility for the impact of our lives, to see it in the end as something beautiful, the breeze made visible, the future made possible.

MARGOT ADLER: Bill McKibben is a scholar in residence at Middlebury College in Middlebury, Vermont. He is most recently the author of "Wandering Home: A Long Walk Across America's Most Hopeful Landscape, Vermont's Champlain Valley and New York's Adirondacks."

Tell us your thoughts about wind power and renewable energy. Or to find out more about the issues we've talked about today, check out our website, [justicetalking.org](http://justicetalking.org). Thanks for joining us and tune in next week. I'm Margot Adler.

A special thanks to the Chatham Bars Inn on Cape Cod and to the Cape and Island's NPR stations, WCAI, 90.1, WNAN, 91.1, and WZAI, 94.3, for hosting this program.

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