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March 8, 2006

The Honorable Peter T. King  
Chairman, House Committee on Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bennie G. Thompson  
Ranking Member, House Committee on Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman King and Ranking Member Thompson:

I am writing to request that the House Committee on Homeland Security hold an oversight hearing as soon as possible to examine the extent to which offshore wind farms affect military, civilian and other radar navigation systems. I am also urging the Committee to fully assess whether federal agencies with a homeland security mission have sufficient independent legal authority to set standards that prevent degradation of critical radar systems on which we depend for national security and public safety.

At the end of last year, after reading press accounts of problems in the United Kingdom, I called for a meeting with Department of Defense (DOD) officials to examine the potential impact of wind farms on radar systems. I also contacted the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and asked them to begin a review of the impact on civilian air traffic control systems.

Yesterday, I was briefed on the status of the DOD investigations. The briefing clearly identified the urgent need for our government to fully examine how wind farms can compromise the effectiveness of critical military and civilian radar systems. Without divulging sensitive defense information, it will suffice to say that yesterday's DOD report was cause for profound concern. There is ample evidence to suggest wind turbines cause some degree of interference with

nearby radar installations. It is not clear what the full impact may be – nor is it clear whether there is sufficient mitigation for all compromised radar systems.

Tax incentives and subsidies for offshore wind farm developers have prompted dozens of project proposals along our nation's coastline. In other countries, where the offshore wind industry has advanced to a greater degree, officials are just now beginning to investigate the effects on existing air and marine navigation systems.

This is of particular concern to me as the nation's first offshore wind farm is slated for my district. In light of yesterday's briefing, I am deeply concerned about the project's proximity to key civilian and military radar installations. Logan International Airport is just 67 nautical miles away, and the Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard, Hyannis and Barnstable municipal airports are even closer. The Air Force's PAVE PAWS radar – part of the country's early warning system for ballistic missiles – is located on the nearby Otis Air National Guard base. Finally, Air Station Cape Cod, the fifth largest air station in the country, which handles SAR missions up and down the East Coast—including Long Island Sound – is within nine nautical miles of the planned project.

As you may know, this 130-turbine wind farm planned for Nantucket Sound is currently under review by the Mineral Management Service (MMS) – a regulatory review process recently codified in the Energy Policy Act of 2005. Further, it has recently come to our attention that the Nantucket Sound project may, in fact, avoid a full review by MMS because of bill language that may exempt the project from new safety and environmental standards. Prior to MMS assuming responsibility for review, the project was partially assessed by the Army Corps of Engineers. It is clear to me that neither federal agency has sufficient funding or the technical capability required to adequately deal with potential radar interference issues and developing mitigation measures.

I commend the hard work of a handful of scientists in the Pentagon's Office of Science and Technology who aggressively followed up on the many questions and concerns that are being raised by Members of Congress and British Military authorities. Regrettably, they are a small group with limited resources. It is not clear that our military and homeland defense agencies are adequately resourced to tackle this issue with the vigor and comprehensiveness it deserves. Much more investigation needs to be done in order to know the full extent of the threat to homeland security.

It is my hope that the Congress can give those responsible for protecting the nation's ports, waterways and air space sufficient funding and legal authority to deal with the profound national security issues associated with offshore emerging wind energy technology. We must ensure that the issues and problems

associated with radar interference will be adequately considered during the nascent regulatory processes for offshore wind farms.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Delahunt". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

William D. Delahunt