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## Danes extol wind farm

Visitors tell legislators the offshore turbines have helped the tourist industry.

By **JOHN LEANING**  
STAFF WRITER

BOSTON - Danish tourism booster Jan Toftdal was once among the harshest critics of Horns Rev, now the world's largest offshore wind farm, off the west coast of Denmark in the North Sea.

But today Toftdal, the director of business development and tourism for Blavandshuk, a seaside resort community within site of the wind farm, is among the biggest promoters of the project.

It's all about the fear of the unknown, Toftdal told a cluster of people at a wind energy forum called by Rep. John Binienda, D-Worcester, chairman of the Joint Committee of Energy and Government Regulations, at the Statehouse yesterday.



JAMES WARREN/CCTimes

Cape Wind Associates of Boston and Yarmouthport invited Toftdal and Soren Krohn, a former top executive with Danish and European wind energy associations, to Massachusetts to discuss their experiences with wind farms with state legislators.

"We invited them to talk about the Danish wind experience and wind power in general. We thought they'd be able to give interested parties the benefit of their experience," said Cape Wind's president, Jim Gordon, who added that his company paid for air fare, hotels and meals for the two visitors.

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The two Danes will also visit Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard tomorrow, and will hold a public meeting at 7 p.m. tomorrow at the Cape Codder Resort on Route 132 in Hyannis.

Cape Wind hopes to build the nation's first offshore wind farm in Nantucket Sound. That project is now under environmental impact review by state and federal agencies.

While wind farm supporters hail the benefits of clean energy and reduced dependence on foreign oil, opponents claim the wind farm would ruin the unspoiled views of Nantucket Sound, hurt tourism and depress waterfront properties within sight of the turbines.

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### Tourism on the rise

"We tried to fight it because we were afraid of it," Toftdal said of his community's experience with the wind farm there. He described Blavandshuk as "the most beautiful place in Denmark" and the second-largest tourist area after the capital city of Copenhagen.

"Ninety percent of the people depend upon tourism. It is very important we maintain the product we have - nature," he told a smattering of Cape legislators, including state Rep. Matthew Patrick, D-Falmouth, officials from Cape Wind Associates and others.

But eventually, Toftdal said, protests died down, and the locals accepted the wind farm, which can be seen on a clear day from the beaches.

Denmark hopes to have 20 percent of its energy from wind power by 2005 in an effort to reduce greenhouse gases, Krohn said. By 2030, wind is expected to provide half the country's energy, he said.

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**HORNS REV WIND FARM**

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- Number of turbines: 80
  - Wattage: 2 megawatts of power each, totaling 160 megawatts. Would be enough to power about 150,000 households.
  - Distance from coast: 7 miles
  - Blade height: 330 feet above sea level
  - Total square miles: 10
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Toftdal and Krohn both said the Horns Rev project was in the same sort of valued water area as Nantucket Sound, a place fished, used by recreational sailors, and close to Denmark's resort coastline. The wind farm is also close to a major migratory bird flyway, and birding has been a major draw for tourists.

And so has the wind farm, Toftdal said.

Rather than turn tourists away, it turns them on, the two men said. They said the number of visits to Blavandshuk has been higher in this, the first year of the wind farm's operation, than in previous years, and property values in the resort community are rising, not falling as some initially feared.

Toftdal also noted the protests helped officials design less obtrusive night lighting for planes, something the Army Corps of Engineers' Karen Adams said she is also working on for the Cape Wind project. Adams, who attended the forum, is the corps' project manager for the extensive environmental review.

Cape Wind's project calls for 130 turbines, 84 feet taller than the 80 turbines erected on Horns Rev, and spread out over 24 square miles. Horns Rev, which began producing its 160 megawatts of power last December, covers an area of 8 square miles.

### **Major foes absent**

The position of the Alliance to Protect Nantucket Sound is that no development should occur in the Sound at all, since many consider it a national treasure. The group also argues that unless adequate federal regulations are in place to ensure the public is compensated for the use of public lands (the wind farm would be in federal water) and properly regulated, no development there should be contemplated.

No one from the Alliance attended yesterday's forum. But Alliance spokesman Ernie Corrigan said a survey by the Beacon Hill Institute of Suffolk University identified tourism dollar losses, as well as property value declines, should a wind farm be erected in the Sound. Cape Wind officials challenged the survey's findings, noting the small size of the sample, and other national surveys that found wind farms on land increase property values.

Representatives of another wind farm foe, the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce, also did not attend, but may go to tomorrow night's meeting, said executive director Wendy Northcross.

Northcross said she would like more information on the Danish resort to be able to make a better comparison with the Cape.

She said the curiosity factor alone might account for increased visits, but she wondered whether that would last over time.

She also noted the chamber's opposition goes beyond economic matters, and embraces the same concerns as voiced by the alliance - private use of public resources without adequate federal jurisdiction and no compensation to the public.

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