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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2024
(PUBLIC HEARING COMMENCED AT 6:05 P.M.)
MR. GAGNON: Good evening. Today is
Thursday, February 22, 2024. It is 6:05 p.m. My name is Ron Gagnon. I am the administrator for the Department of Environmental Management Office of Customer and Technical Assistance. With me tonight is Joseph LoBianco, who is the deputy chief of the DEM Office of Legal Services.

We gather at the Portsmouth High School
today regarding a public comment hearing concerning the application of SouthCoast Wind Energy, LLC, for a State of Rhode Island dredge permit that includes a State of Rhode Island water quality certification, pursuant to Section 401 of the Federal Clean Water Act and in accordance with the rules and regulations for dredging and the management of dredge materials and the State water quality regulations.

This hearing is being conducted under the authority of the Administrative Procedures Act located under Chapter 42-35 of the General Laws of Rhode Island.

In accordance with the Act's requirements,
public notices of this hearing were published in The Providence Journal, the Portsmouth Times, the Sakonnet Times, and the Bristol Phoenix. Notice was also posted on the Department's website.

The purpose of this public comment hearing is to afford interested parties an opportunity to comment on the noted application. This hearing is not intended as a means of providing a forum for discussion, debating, arguing, or otherwise having any dialogue at this time with members of the Department.

Information on the application is available at the rear of the auditorium, and you may review the materials prior to making your comments. Please note that the DEM jurisdiction for this project is limited to the cable route in the state of Rhode Island waters. It does not include the wind farm, cables in federal waters, or the overland cable route through Portsmouth.

The procedure we will use for those who wish to speak is as follows: If you have not done so, please register in the rear of the auditorium. I will call the speakers in the order of their registration. We will allow five minutes for each
individual to make comments on the record. When your name is called, please come to the microphone and speak slowly and clearly so that the stenographer can accurately transcribe your comments. We ask that you please respect the time limits so that all commenters may be heard. Written comments will also be accepted until 4 p.m. on March 7, 2024. After the time has elapsed for the submission of written comments, the Department will prepare a written response to all comments, and then we will complete the review process and issue the final determination.

So now we can begin with the registered speakers. So the first speaker on the list is Chris Gadbois.

MS. GADBOIS: Thanks so much for allowing me to speak tonight. My name is Chris Gadbois. I live in Island Park, and $I$ am so excited that this project is moving along.

COURT REPORTER: Can you just spell your last name for me.

MS. GADBOIS: What's that?
COURT REPORTER: Spell your last name for me.

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MS. GADBOIS: G-A-D-B-O-I-S.
COURT REPORTER: Thank you.
MS. GADBOIS: Thank you. And we know that while the word, "dredging," may sound scary to some of us who are not engineers and scientists, we also know that the establish of burying -- the practice of burying cables for transmission of energy is well-established and there are best practices established, and I think our only concern should be that those best practices are followed. Thanks for allowing me to speak tonight.

MR. GAGNON: Thank you. The next person
is David Booth or Brook.
MR. BOOTH: Hi. Good evening. My name is
David Booth, B-O-O-T-H. I'm a field coordinator with Climate Jobs Rhode Island. I also serve on the board of the Rhode Island Painters Union, Local 195.

Climate Jobs is a coalition of 30 environmental organizations, labor unions, community leaders, and so on and so forth. And we're working to make Rhode Island a national leader in family sustaining clean energy jobs, and we do that by trying to work within our communities
to make things happen, rather than stop things from happening.

That being said, speaking from the perspective of a building tradesman of over 20 years, I'd like to say a few words in support of this permit. We're talking about building an infrastructure that, once in place, is going to operate cleanly and use zero resources. If our energy needs continue to grow, would we rather build something like this or continue the way we're doing using fossil fuels and pollution and continue to make the air and water worse.

There's 6,000 in people Rhode Island
working in what we call old-tech energy.
Rhode Island's one of the holdout states that still uses mostly natural gas. That's going to change. And those people and families are going to need jobs and career paths. This already happened with coal back in 2016. When we stopped importing coal in 2016, a year later, 2017, Brayton Point closed. My father-in-law was one of the last two men out the door.

So we're talking about re-opening
Brayton Point. We're talking about getting the
jobs back. Real jobs. Not door-to-door jobs selling solar panels. We're building an infrastructure and economy that's going to serve the next several generations to come as previous generations did for us.

Rhode Island has a history of making its mark at the forefront of industry, from jewelry manufacturing, engineering at Brown \& Sharpe, the Tiffany Company makes the Lombardi trophy. I think everybody here knows that. Cross pens and now we have the very first offshore wind farm in Block Island, too. So we're right there again, right where we need to be, at the forefront of a major explosion in industry, and $I$ think we would be smart to take advantage of that.

Every day there's new ways of doing things that are better, cleaner, quieter, safer than the old ways. The far greater harm is in doing nothing but business as usual. I live right across the bay in Tiverton where Mount Hope meets the Sakonnet. So this is going right by my house. I grew up here on the water.

I remember being ten years old the first time I saw a flounder, you know. And I thought it
was so crazy looking. It looked like an alien. And then, soon after that, you kind of find out that they're as delicious as they are funny-looking.

But the point is that younger people don't know that because there's no flounder anymore. There's just scup, because the water's too warm and it's too polluted. And so those are the things that we're trying to fix. Those problems are already here.

Replacing fossil fuels with clean energy is the solution. There is no other solution. The dredging permit is a necessary part of that, and as such, we're strongly in support. And maybe by the time my three-year-old is ten, he'll know what a flounder is. Thank you very much.

MR. GAGNON: Thank you. Next person is Jeff Migneault.

MR. MIGNEAULT: Do you want me to spell that? $\mathrm{M}-\mathrm{I}-\mathrm{G}-\mathrm{N}-\mathrm{E}-\mathrm{A}-\mathrm{U}-\mathrm{L}-\mathrm{T}$.

It's great to be here to speak tonight. So I'm copresident of Climate Action Rhode Island. Climate Action Rhode Island, also known as CARI, is about 3,000 members, mainly Rhode Islanders, all
volunteers, who are dedicated to Rhode Island doing its part in the just transition away from fossil fuels because that's what's necessary.

And the part about doing our part, that's really important. The only way that the climate crisis is avoided is by everyone, every entity, doing their part. So that's what's needed.

You're going to hear a lot from people.
Some knowing much more about the details of dredging. And there will be a lot of misinformation tonight. A lot of it said by people that believe it sincerely, but it's still misinformation.

I can't tell you there will be no negative effects of the dredging. Whenever there's a large infrastructure, there are impacts. But that's not the question. The question is how serious are the impacts and compared to what. And clean energy from these wind farms will displace an immense amount of fossil fuels that cause an immense amount of pollution and threaten our very future.

It's easy to believe climate change is only in the future and won't really affect us. And of course it will be much worse in the future, but

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it's already here, and it's already affecting us. Research shows that 350,000 Americans die from fossil fuel air pollution each year. So that, by population average, is a thousand Rhode Islanders dying from fossil fuels, and many of those are from pediatric asthma in overburdened neighborhoods.

Sea level in Rhode Island has already risen about 9 inches, and the rate of rise is accelerating, and that's going to affect every part of Rhode Island's beautiful coastline. The smoke from the Canadian forest fires this summer, which were unprecedented, affected us all. There's clear research that inhaling that smoke at the levels we inhaled it increases levels of heart attack, stroke, cancer, miscarriage, and premature birth.

And in the end, I know there's a lot of concern about fisheries, but the real threat to fisheries is the warming and acification of the ocean that's part of climate change. And I kind of feel like we should be almost embarrassed by how late we are to tap into our offshore wind resources. There are 6,000 wind turbines just off the coast of Europe, and there have been no large ecological effects of that. It's just not true.

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The UK alone produces 15,000 megawatts of offshore wind a year. Yesterday, five wind turbines came online in the Vineyard Wind and producing -- producing 68 megawatts. So 68 versus 15,000. That's how far behind. Sixty-eight is great, and it's a beginning. So we'll all be better off tapping this incredible clean energy resource. Our children will be better off, and the whole world will be better off. Thank you.

MR. GAGNON: Next name is David Brunetti.
MR. BRUNETTI: Hi. David Brunetti,
$B-R-U-N-E-T-T-I . \quad I ' m$ also a member of
Climate Action Rhode Island.
So Rhode Island's climate goals rely on offshore wind, and we currently have no plan to meet them without this project. We desperately need a massive transition to clean, renewable energy. This is part of the necessary permitting process to get us there.

We need to keep in mind what the local, national, and global impacts will be on people and all life on earth if we don't press forward with projects like this. As long as this project is in compliance with Section 401 of the Federal Clean

Water Act, the rules and regulations for dredging, and the management of dredge materials, and State water quality regulations, then $I$ see no reason why this proposal shouldn't be approved. Burying an underwater cable is a safe, well-established practice, similar to what has already been done in the area for many uses such as electric power
lines. Block Island and Martha's Vineyard get their electricity from similar buried, underwater power lines. So I see no issue with this proceeding forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with my comments.

MR. GAGNON: The next speaker is
Sue Kelley.
MS. KELLEY: Hi. My name is Sue Kelley, $\mathrm{K}-\mathrm{E}-\mathrm{L}-\mathrm{L}-\mathrm{E}-\mathrm{Y}$. And I am also a volunteer with CARI, and I'm always accused of being overly dramatic.

It is true that we barrel forward with energy measures that only later demonstrate their destructive effects. No one hesitated with coal because it was cheap and kept us warm. No one told us that fracking would contaminate hundreds of millions of gallons of water, making it undrinkable

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forever. We couldn't imagine Fukushima either. While years from now we may learn that wind turbines cause damage that we currently don't imagine, but they will not equal the damage of nuclear energy, coal, or oil and gas. What is understood about wind turbine interface with ocean life, BOEM, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, makes an effort to address by working to mitigate dangers by, for instance, being careful not to place turbines in migratory flight paths. Yes, we always do damage, but right now, at this moment, we are standing on the precipice of an unlivable planet and seem relatively blasé about leaving our children an environmental hell.

We dither and think we have forever to work towards saving our kids. We all know that, to do our best to save the earth, we must stop using and drilling and digging for fossil fuel. If we could stop fossil fuel consumption immediately, we would be taking sane, protective action for our children.

I adore our oceans, too. I understand why people fight the technology that will possibly do minimal environmental harm to our beloved seas. We
can and should demand that whatever environmental harm may be involved, that it be mitigated and addressed by the wind energy companies. We can check that they are doing what we demand. We can demand that they stay within the lines we set, but we cannot create a new planet for our children. Wind technology provides a renewable source of energy for all of us, while doing limited harm to the environment. We must act. We must use every kind of renewable energy we can as quickly as we can. We must do all we can to leave fossil fuels in the ground. We have to. Our time to save our children and life on our green Earth is extremely limited. We must allow wind energy development and implementation to proceed at the fastest pace possible. Right here, right now. The stakes are too high to do less.

MR. GAGNON: Thank you. The next speaker
is Greg Vespe.
MR. VESPE: Thank you. My last name is
Vespe, V-E-S-P-E.
And what I want to speak on tonight is
specific to the permit request for the
Sakonnet River. And I would just ask DEM to

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remember that it's our last Class 2 waterway, marine waterway left in the state.

I'm not here to object to cables in
general. I did not object to the West Passage cables that have been run. But I am very concerned that in the tie-in to get renewable energy, the Sakonnet River's being chosen as the path to run the cables for a couple of reasons. One, it's our last Class 2 waterway. We're not going to get it back once it's gone. Once you permit one set of cables to run down that river, it's not really feasible or likely we're going to tell the next person that requests permission to run cables down the river that they can't. So once the horse is out of the barn, it's not going back.

There's two other ways to get down the bay. There's the East Passage and the West Passage. The West Passage has already had electrical cables run through it. That's been cleared and passed, and it's not a Class 2 waterway. My concern is that we're treating the Sakonnet like an industrial park, and it's not. It's our last waterway left that has very little industrialization. It's the closest thing to
pristine that we have. It's also the last conch fishery that we have that's healthy. And conchs don't move very fast. They're very slow. They barely get out of their own way. The dredge is going to bisect the river completely in half, 22 miles. And as our own DEM fisheries biologists have spoken, it's reasonable to consider that that population will be split in half permanently into East and West Passage. There's no guarantee that those conchs are going to migrate over, especially if there's some electrical output from that cable because they don't ever leave the ground.

So, again, there's not to say that -- I guess I'm concerned that the tie-in is, if we're pro or against offshore wind, somehow that river has to be chosen. And I just wanted to speak specifically to the river, and that there's other passageways. There's land passageways. And while they might not be quite as convenient, they certainly wouldn't have the ecological damage that dredging the entire 20 miles of the river would. So thank you very much.

MR. GAGNON: Okay. The next speaker is
Dennis Lassige.

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MR. LASSIGE: Good evening. My name is
Dennis Lassige, L-A-S-S-I-G-E. I'm a
representative of the North Atlantic States
Regional Council of Carpenters. I represent 2,500 carpenters, piledrivers, and millwrights living in the state of Rhode Island. We are here tonight in support of this project.

Mostly, we appreciate the job creation.
Right now, there's 300 construction jobs that are occurring in the Port of Providence because of offshore wind. There's over a hundred jobs that are occurring right now in Quonset Point because of offshore wind. That doesn't speak to the men and women that have already gone offshore, on offshore wind projects in the state of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, doing foundation installation, tower installation, turbine installation, and cable-lay operations. Men and women with me tonight are slated to go to the cable-lay operation for Revolution Wind. That's what I'd like to talk about.

The project that we're talking about tonight isn't new. It's not novel. It's not unique. It's not complex. It's not detrimental.

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The State of Rhode Island already approved cable-lay operation. For Block Island Wind, they got the weigh-in and cable-lay operations for Vineyard Wind in Massachusetts. They've already approved, with reasonable conditions, cable-lay operation for Revolution Wind, a project that will go up Narragansett Bay and make landfall at Quonset Point.

And I would ask that this Board approve the same. The same type of project in the same type of marine environment because it's already done so in the past. And I appreciate your time. Thank you.

MR. GAGNON: The next speaker is Joel Gates.

MR. GATES: Good evening. My name is Joel Gates, G-A-T-E-S. I'm from Glocester, Rhode Island.

I am testifying in support of approving the dredge permit. As I understand, this dredging project will have only a temporary negative impact and a limited physical scope. I am far more worried about the impact the climate crisis will have on our community if the deployment of offshore
wind is slowed or stopped.
Traveling to Portsmouth this evening reminded me of my excitement in seeing the Portsmouth Abbey turbine for the first time. That was almost 18 years ago when $I$ celebrated the new turbine at the Abbey's open house with my seven-year-old daughter and other enthusiastic folks.

I remember thinking that now that we have one turbine up and running, it will be a quick, easy path to the successful installation of wind power in Rhode Island and the whole country. The turbine, just outside these doors, followed a few years later. But Cape Wind, the offshore wind project of that same time, was met with powerful obstructionists. The project ended by succumbing to a slow, painful death.

Fortunately, we now have a more robust, experienced, and educated offshore wind industry. Unfortunately, there are still obstructionists spreading misinformation who are more worried about their view than the well-being of everyone's environment. If we don't do all we can to end our fossil fuel addiction, the view will be the least

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of our worries. Thank you.
MR. GAGNON: The next speaker is
Bill Thompson.
MR. THOMPSON: Bill Thompson,
$\mathrm{T}-\mathrm{H}-\mathrm{O}-\mathrm{M}-\mathrm{P}-\mathrm{S}-\mathrm{O}-\mathrm{N} . \quad$ While reviewing Revolution Wind, CRMC inferred that they were essentially powerless to stop the project. That even if they had voted against granting Ocean SAMP consistency, BOEM could overrule their objection and permit the project. In fact, that is not true, but it does convey the prevailing attitude that, regardless of the numerous adverse impacts, no one has the power to stop the offshore wind development's plan for our coastal waters.

Given the considerable political and financial forces at play, I'm wondering if DEM feels the same way, that with a little bit of practicable mitigation, permit approval is a foregone conclusion. So if DEM does determine that the proposed dredging would pose a substantial risk to public health and to the marine ecosystem, would DEM feel obligated to reject the permit request, and would they be willing to reject it? Thank you. MR. GAGNON: The next speaker is

Katie Hamilton.
MS. HAMILTON: Hi. My name is
Katie Hamilton, $H-A-M-I-L-T-O-N$. Thank you for being here.

I think it's important to state who we are so that we all know what our motives are. I'm a Middletown resident. I was brought here as a result of my father-in-law being in the Naval Academy and being stationed in 1953 on an aircraft carrier in the bay.

I consider this an unbelievable pristine and beautiful environment, where there's incredible fishing, beautiful wildlife, and a state that doesn't actually need a lot of this power.

I'm a beekeeper. I'm a swimmer who's gone across the bay eight times. And I love drinking the water. It's very, very tasty. I'm a gardener, and I'm an angler. I'm also a stockholder of the environment. What I'm not is a billionaire, a climate denier, and I'm not being paid to be up here. I'm doing this shaking from my head to my feet.

As Theodore Roosevelt said, "Men and nature must work hand in hand. The throwing out of

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balance of the resources of nature throws out of balance also the lives of men." That was in 1950 -- sorry -- '35. We are now at an imbalance, and industry and development has never grounded this world or this environment in a more positive area. You do not develop and create industry to prevent the warming. That only creates more. Additionally, I think we should talk about risk damage. And I would ask that BOEM -- sorry -that DEM discuss the disruption of fish migrations and physical disturbances of habitats, including smaller animals and fish and seedlings and such in the sedimentation as they plow through the entirety of the Sakonnet and divide it in half. This will affect fish spawning.

Dredging also causes interment and carries things down the river. No matter how gentle you might be, there's -- actually, the second largest river in all of China is called the Yellow River because sediments that are carried down are yellow. We will not be seeing our sediment, but it will have an impact, even on the photosynthesis of things coming from above, from what I've read in various books, including -- sorry -- magazines,

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including the Journal of Marine Science.
They also said, the Journal of Marine Science, alterations to any portion of the ecosystem, such as changes in the bottom dwelling, have the potential to impact levels of the entire food web. I would ask that to be under consideration as you move forward with your decisions.

Additionally, I would like more information regarding the cables themselves. They currently have heat that would emit from them. This can alter the temperature and chemistry of the surrounding waters. It affects the growth and survival of some of the marine organisms, and this, again, is from Scientific and also NOAA has an article on that. And I'd like to know more about the positive and negative effects you see on that heat.

Additionally, there are pollutants and contaminants in the actual cables themselves, and I would like to know more about those while they exist underground, additionally, in a decommissioning situation. It's also not to be lost that it's not a river. It's actually a tidal

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straight, and it moves both ways. So these sediments and all the sedimentary will be going up and down and up and down.

So I'd love to know more about testing, specifically with EMS and their emission in the area on the marine life, and I'd like a baseline of what's in our bay now. As one gentleman pointed out, the flounder seem to be gone. Interestingly enough, that's probably because of the warmth, and this will increase the temperature of the water, is my understanding.

I also would like to point out that it might be beneficial for more of us to know about the issues with respect to damage and problems with the actual cables should they be approved.

I'm getting dinged.
The cost to repair cables is one thing, but more importantly, down in North Carolina, the damage to cables is the number one insurance plan of the offshore wind development. The cables cost as much as 1 million per kilometer to be repaired. And that's worth considering when the decommissioning plans are put in place because when they start losing money, they're going to ask for

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passes on decommissioning potentially. So I ask that to be a consideration.

And we're not the first ones going through this. The Kansas River Kaw -- we might have all watched the Super Bowl -- they've been managing the effects of sediment retribution in their area through dredging and have a whole world of information on it.

I will end with this: If the earth was an apartment, we wouldn't be getting our security deposit back. Stop building the apartments, stop building the roads, stop building. Turn your lights off. Do anything you can. Development will not save us.

MR. GAGNON: Next the speaker is
Leila Ray.
MS. GEE: Hi. Leila couldn't come, and I am here, Constance Gee, in her stead.

COURT REPORTER: What's your name?
MS. GEE: Constance Gee, G-E-E. There are just so many questions about this, and I've gone online and tried to find answers to these questions, but cannot. And so $I$ was hoping to be able to pose them this evening, and perhaps you can

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make the responses or your answers available online where we can actually read them. I would really appreciate it.

So here are a few. Have core samples from the proposed cable route been taken? We've asked that again and again. If so, where are the published results available? If not, why have they not been taken? And if -- if there have been no core samplings of the sediment taken, then why is approval for dredging even being discussed at this juncture?

We already know bay and river sediments are contaminates -- are contaminated with chemicals and heavy metals going back to the 1800s. I guess the question now is, what are the contamination levels along the proposed dredging cable and cable-laying routes? What dredging and cable-laying methods will be employed to minimize the resuspension of these contaminants?

What assurances can you give us, the public, that marine life and, ultimately, human life, will not be negatively impacted by resuspended contaminants during the dredging and cable installation processes. What is your

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proposed timing of the cable-laying process from beginning to end?

Will you commit to not working during spawning season for various marine species, species who spawn and hatch in Mount Hope Bay and the Sakonnet? What types of machinery does SouthCoast plan to use for preparation of the seabed and for the installment of cables? How wide and deep will trenching need to be at various points along the cable corridor? Do you anticipate going over areas in the river or bay that cannot be trenched out but where cabling will need to be laid on top of the seabed?

Thank you for allowing me to ask these questions, and $I$ hope you will be providing answers that are easily found on a website. Thank you.

MR. GAGNON: The next speaker is
Kyle Kossak.
MR. KOSSAK: K-O-S-S-A-K.
So I'm a Portsmouth native, and I also
have two engineering degrees and decades of experience in the design of naval undersea systems as a federal engineer. Note that I'm not here in any official context.

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I have spent nearly my whole life in and around the sakonnet. On weekends, year round, you can find me kayaking, picking up trash along the shores. Trust me when I say that I care deeply about it.

From a technical standpoint, I see no issues with this proposal for cable dredging. There's nothing unusual about this and is no different from the cables that have already been installed all over the world.

I also reviewed the environment report presented by SouthCoast to CRMC last year. They cited six peer-reviewed environmental sitings of past projects, three of which included our own Block Island wind farm.

I am particularly impressed that they have conducted benthic surveys in order to precisely route the cable through the lowest impact corridor. To my knowledge, the existing gas and water pipelines that already run under the Sakonnet River made no such considerations for environmental impact. I'm also told that they have a full-time archeologist on staff to preserve any potential cultural artifacts that they may encounter.

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I believe that SouthCoast Wind has done their due diligence towards minimizing environmental impact, going far above and beyond what is typical for comparable projects.

I still intend to be here in 30 years. At that time, I'll be proud to say that my hometown was a key player in the creation of

American-produced clean energy. Thank you.
MR. GAGNON: The next speaker is
Karen Gleason.
MS. GLEASON: Thank you. Karen, with a "K," Gleason, G-L-E-A-S-O-N.

I am a native to Portsmouth. I have never lived anywhere else, and I'm truly vested in this community. I care about the welfare of our citizens, including our young children, adults, and our seniors.

Portsmouth citizens, in recent months, have had our issues with our own local government. We lack trust in recent decisions that have been made on key issues. Accepting a host agreement from a wind company is, by far, in my own opinion, the worst decision that Portsmouth Town Council has ever made in decades. And now the same wind

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company, SouthCoast, is requesting a permit from Rhode Island DEM, Department of Environmental Management, to approve dredging and cabling in the Sakonnet River and Mount Hope Bay. Note that the cabling will include two sets of cable bundles, each carrying 345,000 volts. Two sets equal to 700,000 volts coming down the Sakonnet. Under Island Park Beach, under Park Avenue, up Boyds Lane, turning east on Anthony Road, and potentially now the backside of Montaup Country Club, before laying into the Montaup Bay en route to Brayton Point Power Station in Somerset, Mass. Think about that, 700,000 volts.

Tonight, I express deep concern allowing 700,000-voltage cables in the outer continental ocean, Rhode Island Sound, Sakonnet River, and Island Park Beach. I, like many others here tonight, have read, studied, researched cabling, EMS, turbine installation, oils and other chemicals used to keep the turbines spinning. The worst, I'm very concerned with the sulfur hexafluoride. Forever chemicals that stay in our atmosphere and certainly the types that you don't ever want to be exposed to.

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Just like the turbines, the cables need continual maintenance, checking for leaks, cracks, damage, resurfacing, etc. And let's not fool ourselves. There's potential for cable cyberattacks from others that may want to shut down our grid, or should I say the Massachusetts grid.

Rhode Island DEM, you have a very
important decision to make after March 7th. What you may or may not know, just like the Portsmouth Town Council, your agency, too, has let us down. You have failed us by not enforcing your own requirements for the large property that sits directly across the street from the Island Park Beach, adjacent to Park Avenue and Boyds Lane, where the proposed cable will run near. That property is known to include toxic dirt, and DEM has mandated that a 2 -foot cap be placed on the property. And to date, as I recall, this has not been completed.

The locals here in Portsmouth Park, Valhalla, and Island Park neighborhoods have been waiting for years. Their health and welfare are still at stake. How are we in this town supposed to trust DEM with ensuring that protocols and

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specifications will be followed with the dredging and cable laying? How are we to trust you with enforcement? Respectfully, your record to date has not met our expectations.

What DEM -- what DEM presence will be here daily to oversee this project? What experience and background does your staff have to even oversee such a large project? Who is going to oversee the cable installation underneath a major gas and water line that exists, lies under Island Park Beach -I'm sorry -- under Park Avenue. Has there been discussions with our local water department or gas company? Is there an emergency plan if, God forbid, the gas line is accidentally hit or damaged during the laying of the cable?

Do you have -- do you have staff that has background experience with the dangers of EMS in our seabeds and roadbeds? Have you seen the geophysical and geotechnical test reports from Southcoast of the river and the bay? If so, where are they? I have asked for reports from Larry Mott, that has been here in the past, and was told months ago that we would get them. Have you read them? What do you know? Please share.

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Do you have concerns for the sediments being disturbed? What are the impacts of the sediments being disturbed in our waters on the sea life, on future use of the beach, and how about our fishing industry?

MR. GAGNON: Five minutes.
MS. GLEASON: DEM, you are aware that the Sakonnet River is Class 1 and 2 waters. One of the cleaner bodies of water in the area. Will the rating change after installation? Will it be better or worse -- please let me finish.

Island Park residents enjoy recreational boating, jet skiing, fishing, clamming, quahogging, swimming, and hanging on the seawall catching up with their friends and more. Residents from surrounding communities visit, too, and enjoy the local eateries as well. This place is booming all summer long.

What will parents think when they see a large sign posted, "Beware of the Large Cables Underneath the Beach" or "Do Not Go Past This Area Due to High Electrified Cabling"? Will the parents feel comfortable allowing their children to swim in the water or just meet up with their friends on the

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seawall? With 700,000 high-voltage cables in the area, are people still going to visit this area? Will there be dead fish and other sea life lying along the beaches and up and down the river or along the Mount Hope Bay? Do we want this to really happen? If so, who's responsible to clean up the beaches all along the coastal properties? MR. GAGNON: Time is up. MS. GLEASON: Will there be an uptick in leukemia in young children who play on the beach or swim in the water? Are you aware of any increases of medical conditions due to environmental
exposures to high-voltage cables?
I know the wind company said the cables are covered and buried, but I'm not comforted with this, as I believe we are not fully protected from EMS just because they may be buried. MR. GAGNON: Can you wrap it up. MS. GLEASON: I personally will avoid driving on Boyds Lane, that area of Park Avenue, and the area of the beach. It will be difficult to avoid Anthony Road, but I will.

DEM, I am asking you that you do not let us down again. Please resolve the situation with
that property I mentioned earlier, but also use your moral compass and allow it to help guide you when making the right decision by protecting our people, our river, and bay. Please do not approve an application request from SouthCoast or any other wind company that's going to come before your agency. The risks and dangers of this overwhelming project are too high. The cost is too high as well.

MR. GAGNON: Are you wrapping up?
MS. GLEASON: I've got one last line.
MR. GAGNON: Okay.
MS. GLEASON: Thank you. The time -- this is the time where we all need to find some bravery, not be afraid, become united, and stand up together. We need to protect ourselves. Stand up, DEM, please, for us. I guarantee you will sleep better at night if DEM can just say no. You're not just saying no for the people here in the audience or the people that live in this town. You also -your decision will also impact you and your families as well.

As far as the wind turbine that exists
500 feet -- 500 yards behind this high school, the

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25 families that live near that windmill still suffer today: Migraines, lack of sleep, flickers. So just I'm cautioning you, please, think of the ill effects from the whole project.

MR. GAGNON: Thank you.
MS. GLEASON: Thank you.
MR. GAGNON: The next speaker is
Donna Lafleur.
MS. LAFLEUR: Hello. My name is
Donna Lafleur, $L-A-F-L-E-U-R$, from Portsmouth, Rhode Island, Island Park.

Okay. So to the members of the Rhode Island DEM, I would like to express my deep opposition to the wind turbine project that wants to bring a high-voltage cable down the sakonnet and land on the beach at Island Park where I have been a resident my entire life since 1959. Please do not tell us that we cannot talk about the birds, the whales, the fish, the fishing grounds, or the fishermen because you cannot have a functioning wind turbine out in the ocean without the cable to hook it up to power and vice versa. They are all relative. So are all the intended and unintended consequences that are sure to follow.

This wind turbine project is wrong on so many levels, from whales, birds, fish migrations, to the fishermen's livelihood being disrupted and impacted, to the point that it will be forced out of business.

State of Rhode Island government officials are supposed to be held to a higher standard, to protect the interests of Rhode Island taxpayers and its territories, waterways, and other natural resources. It is very concerning that this company, and others like it, have been able to throw their money around and influence local and state agencies. We are being sold out.

I cannot speak on all of the topics so I will leave it to others. My biggest concern is the one that literally hits home where I live. The rivers, the Sakonnet River, our beach, our town, our fishing, our shellfish beds. If you look at the water, just the water, it's clean. The river brings life to all the surrounding ponds and coves and estuaries, where beautiful, clean water runs in and out with the tide.

The fish are back. And even the
Mount Hope Bay is thriving with fish once again.

However, there is a very dirty past hidden just below the surface of the bay and the riverbed. My family always had boats so we would occasionally take a ride up past Brayton Point to go see the, "Big Mamie," located near the Braga Bridge. And I never forgot how dirty the water was. It truly looked like root beer in the wake of the transom. Of course, we never swam or fished in that water. It was polluted beyond belief.

The water is clean now, but it took decades, going back to the 770 s, due to the efforts of organizations like Save the Bay, who fought hard to stop the pollution and still do to this day. Going back to the 1800s and the industrial revolution, there was so much contamination dumped into the upper bay, both the Narragansett Bay and the Mount Hope Bay. The water was literally dark brown.

The Brayton Point power plant was one of the filthy five. It was the filthiest one. It polluted the air, but it also polluted the water. Along with many other industrial companies, jewelry, silverware, textile manufacturers, ships, oil tankers, tank farms, sewerage plants, all
contributed to it. They put tons upon tons of toxic waste into the water, and all that poison now rests in the sediment below the surface of the bay and the riverbeds. And it's called legacy sediment, and time has no bearing on it. It does not disappear. It just stays there.

The toxic metals can remain there for eternity.

MR. GAGNON: One minute.
MS. LAFLEUR: Well, I got more to say. I'm sorry. The toxic metals -- I'm here. I've been working on this for three days. I should be on vacation this week. I'm here.

MR. LoBIANCO: Ma'am, if $I$ may -- and $I m^{\prime}$ not going to cut you off. I'm going to let you continue. We'll stop the clock. I just want to say --

MS. LAFLEUR: Because you don't want to hear what I'm saying because you know it's right.

MR. LoBIANCO: Ma'am --
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: She can have my time.

MR. LoBIANCO: Okay. That's fine.
MS. LAFLEUR: Thank you.

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MR. LoBIANCO: The only thing $I$ want to say, for everybody's sake, we want to be fair to everyone. We want to allow everyone to be heard tonight. There are, I think, about 30-something people that signed up, but $I$ want to be fair to the last person who signed up and not have to make him wait until ten o'clock tonight. We want to try to give -- we hope everyone can be respectful and try to stick to five minutes. But keep in mind that you can also comment --

MS. LAFLEUR: I haven't used up five minutes yet.

MR. LoBIANCO: No, no, ma'am. We stopped the clock. We're going to allow you to have more time. Don't worry about that. I'm just saying, in general, for everyone -- everyone's notification. Even if you do run out of time or even if you leave tonight and think you forgot something that you wanted to add to the record, you can certainly comment in writing up until March 7th. And you may even want to take what you've written so far and, regardless of having already said it on the record, submit a written copy.

MS. LAFLEUR: Oh, I definitely am. Yes.

MR. LoBIANCO: Great. And $I$ just say that for everyone. And we'll allow you to continue at this point. I just, again, we're just trying to be fair to everybody.

MS. LAFLEUR: Okay. Can I continue?
MR. LoBIANCO: Yes, ma'am.
MS. LAFLEUR: Thank you. So where was I?
I said heavy metals do not disappear over time. They can be trapped in deeper levels of sediment until mining, geological, or biological processes release them. At which point they may affect plant and animal life.

In a report from the Mayflower Wind dated August 2021, Appendix H, water quality report dock revision $B$, on Page 20 , which $I$ can provide, it says, a test sample was taken from a depth of 0.8 centimeters, which is only approximately three-quarters of an inch. Three-quarters of an inch is how far they went down and found arsenic, cadmium, chromium, copper, iron, lead, mercury, nickel, silver, and zinc. There are others, but they were not listed.

So at only three-quarters of an inch all of these toxins were found. What is going to
happen when they start dredging and tunnelling through this hot spot of toxic waste? Even if they only lay a cable on top, they are surely going to move more than three-quarters of an inch of the seabed, which would be released back into the water and pollute it all over again.

They want to go down 6 feet. I would urge for sediment testing going down 6 feet, not three-quarters of an inch. It took decades to clean up the bay and river, to bring it back to life. And in no time at all, if you will allow them to lay this cable, all the good that's been accomplished will be for nothing. Our waters will be polluted once again.

I cannot believe that even this is being considered knowing full well that this could lead to an environmental disaster. Does Rhode Island DEM want to give the green light to do something that is frightening to even think about? Your job is to protect the environment, not pollute it.

The Sakonnet is an estuary of
Rhode Island Sound and connects with Mount Hope Bay. That means anything released in the bay is going to end up in the river. I cannot find a sediment test
study that has been conducted in the river. Only water tests. Not sediment tests. I bet there is also contaminated sediment in the river as well because the Mount Hope Bay flows into the Sakonnet River. I want a sediment test 6 feet down.

The Sakonnet River was not never used as a shipping lane for huge tankers or barges like the Narragansett Bay, but it did suffer a lot of pollution, as I have mentioned. I can remember seeing clumps of grease and oil on the beach in the cove. Probably from a spill from the tank farm located in Tiverton.

We also had sewage pollute half the cove, and it polluted the entire front beach of Island Park. To this day, you cannot shellfish there. All of the residents of Rhode Island who have cesspools or older septic systems within 200 feet of the water had to install new septic systems and replace cesspools. My mother had to do it, even though her cesspool was not even close to the water. But it must have been within 200 feet so she had to do it. Ordinary, tax-paying citizens, most of them who cannot afford to upgrade
their system, had to comply to the DEM so they did. They didn't have a choice. All to protect these waters.

And it has been raining, and I see the water is now so much cleaner. But now you would let SouthCoast come in and pollute our waters all over again. How could you?

We do still have shellfish in the cove, oyster beds, blue shell crabs. I've even seen bay scallops coming back into the cove. If they pollute the cove, myself and many residents of Island Park are going to be outraged. It would be devastating. The bay, the river, they all mix together. Westport, Falmouth were chosen, but because they have shellfish beds and the residents didn't want the project affecting their environment, that's it. They didn't have to do it. The residents of Island Park don't want it affecting their environment as well.

In a letter on December 1st from the CRMC of Rhode Island stated on Page 9 that the entire river has been designated as an inshore, juvenile cod habitat area of particular concern. It goes on to say that the adverse impacts of the

Sakonnet River must be avoided, and it must result in significant -- and it may result in significant long-term, cumulative impacts to the stock. It also says, and I quote, therefore, Mayflower Wind, now known as SouthCoast, should provide an alternative to the proposed Sakonnet River cable route to minimize the impacts of the project on complex habitat within the Sakonnet River, in particular, the Atlantic cod fish, as described above. An alternative should be considered by Mayflower Wind for inclusion with the CRMC state permit application and its complete avoidance of the Sakonnet River, given that there is a potential for significant impacts to support marine habitat.

In another letter from NOAA, dated on
April 18, 2023, on Page 4, they wrote, "We appreciate the consideration of the land-based alternative for the export-cable corridor, and we consider this to be the environmentally preferred alternative for the export-cable route. Avoid the Sakonnet River through a land-based cable route would reduce the impacts to the aquatic resources, including important estuarine habitat designated for $H A P C$ for juvenile Atlantic cod." So can
someone tell me why CRMC agreed to continue this, knowing the SouthCoast has yet to obtain any funding for these projects?

Also, why didn't they meet with the residents of Portsmouth as well so they could talk about the Atlantic cod. All of this is starting to stink really bad, and it isn't the fish. I know you are all under a great deal of pressure to do this from the White House on down, but that doesn't make it right.

As of last week, I read many of these companies are pulling the plug on these projects because of the funding and all the controversy and lack of supply chains. I would highly recommend the Rhode Island DEM do its job and protect Rhode Island interests in the name of the taxpayers that pay your salaries. Do your job. Leave the sediment in the seabed and never touch it. Keep our waterways clean. I'm done. I guess I'm really upset.

MR. GAGNON: The next speaker is Jeanne Smith.

MS. SMITH: Jeanne, J-E-A-N-N-E, Smith.
I'm from Island Park. Mine is short and sweet.

Many people have come up here tonight because they want to save the planet. We want to save the planet, too.

SouthCoast has said going through the Sakonnet River is the cheapest route. There are other routes they can take to save the planet. Save our community, because our community is part of the planet. Thank you.

MR. GAGNON: The next speaker is
Dwight McNeill.
MR. MCNEILL: My name is Dwight McNeill, $\mathrm{M}-\mathrm{C}-\mathrm{N}-\mathrm{E}-\mathrm{I}-\mathrm{L}-\mathrm{L}$.

I live about a hundred yards from the Sakonnet River, and $I$ think it is the most beautiful river I have ever seen. I sail there. My children and my grandchildren have swam there as well.

Over the last month, we've had two very serious storms in that area around Fogland Point, which have literally decimated that area. So the idea of climate change coming home right here was very obvious to me.

I think we have to make trade-offs about our desire to have a beautiful waterway with the
need to make a very, very important transformation to renewable energy. I don't think there is any doubt that we have to do that. I believe that the regulatory agencies from the feds down to the state have done a very comprehensive job in eliciting inquiry from people, setting goals, and being demanding. However, regulation also slows things down terribly, as do special interest groups, of which there are many. We can't slow this down anymore. We have to proceed to have clean energy. Thank you for your time. MR. GAGNON: The next speaker is

Nick Horton.
MR. HORTON: Hi. Thank you. My name is Nick Horton. I'm from Providence, Rhode Island.

I'm here as a member of Climate Action Rhode Island in support of this proposal asking you to help us stop global warming, help us make Rhode Island energy independent, not dependent on foreign oil.

What frightens me more than any uncertainties in this project is the uncertainty of what will happen to Rhode Island and the whole world if we don't expand renewable energy.

According to a Princeton study, to fully decarbonize our energy in the U.S., we would need wind and solar spanning up to 590,000 square kilometers, roughly equal to the landmass of Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Ohio, Rhode Island, and Tennessee put together. This gives us a sense of the scale of the challenge we are dealing with. We need projects like this one to survive. Each project like this one.

So I ask, if we don't allow this project to move forward, what are people's other ideas? People in Portsmouth, like the rest of Rhode Island, produce about 9.7 metric tons of carbon per year, in comparison to the average globally of only 4. If we don't build this project, how will Rhode Islanders reduce their carbon footprint? Those of you who are opposed to development of this type, will you stop driving your cars, flying in planes, running air-conditioning?

We also must look at this application to bury this cable in context. The Sakonnet Harbor was created by dredging. The project was expanded
in 1957 when the Corps constructed a 400-foot long extension to the breakwater and dredged the harbor to the depth of 8 feet. The total area dredged was 13 acres.

In 1954, the Algonquin natural gas
pipeline was buried across the Sakonnet. Just last month, Enbridge submitted an application to replace this pipe with a pipe twice as large. I'm curious if there's as much concern about that application as there is this.

We must compare the disturbances from this project to the damage from fossil fuels. The fossil fuels we all rely on are disruptive and pollute in other places. Petroleum refineries that kill people along Cancer Alley in Louisiana, fracking that poisons water in Pennsylvania, pipelines that destroy habitats like tundra in Alaska. If we don't make space for renewable energies in our backyards, we are forcing it into the backyards of others. Thank you.

MR. GAGNON: The next speaker is
Renée Critchley. Sorry if I mispronounced that. MS. CRITCHLEY: Yes, you did. Hi.

Renée Critchley, C-R-I-T-C-H-L-E-Y.

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I have been a resident here, born and bred, and the Sakonnet River is not the ideal place. I don't know who came up with this idea. I would love to see another proposed idea. Not the Sakonnet River. I'm all for clean energy. I have solar panels on the house. I recycle. Transfer station. Woo-hoo. Recycle, everybody. So I think I'm doing my part. I think I'm being a responsible citizen.

I just want to know why we're so ignored. And I want to know why our Town Council tells us we can't talk about the impacts on our ocean life, on birds. I just don't understand. Maybe I'm naive. I just want to know how this was passed without us knowing. I believe in politics. Work for the people. I don't know if $I$ believe in that anymore.

But I'm hoping that the Rhode Island DEM could answer questions for us, too. Maybe you guys could answer some questions. I don't understand how a deal just goes through.

We don't have a way to speak, and I don't like being shushed. I pay taxes. We all pay taxes. I just want to know how this was passed. How we're not allowed to speak our mind. I don't
know how many times people have been told to get off the mike. Please be respectful.

I've been born and bred here, fourth generation. It's personal. I love it here. Thank you.

MR. GAGNON: The next speaker is
Pat Walsh.
MS. MELLO: Hi. I'm Carol Mello.
Pat Walsh had to leave.
COURT REPORTER: What's your name?
MS. MELLO: Carol Mello. He had to leave so he told me I could take his spot.

Basically, I have a lot of questions. Are you guys able to answer any questions tonight? MR. LoBIANCO: No, ma'am. It's a public comment hearing. So what we do is we take all of the public comments. And what would happen is the staff -- remember, we're here on two permits. One of them is a dredge permit, and the other one, Ron?

MR. GAGNON: And water quality
certificate.
MR. LoBIANCO: And a water quality
certificate. So specialists in those areas will
respond to the comments in writing. Keep in mind
also, we're keeping the public comment open until March 7th for the public comment period so people can also comment in writing or via email.

MS. MELLO: Okay. So I just -- if
SouthCoast is here, could they answer questions?
MR. LoBIANCO: That would be up to them if they have representatives here.

MS. MELLO: I just wanted to know what --
MR. LoBIANCO: Just to be clear, we prefer, obviously, that happen off the record. We're trying to create a record here of public comment because we're required to respond in writing.

MS. MELLO: Okay. Well, then, for the record, I want to know what machinery is being used by SouthCoast. How deep that trench and how wide that trench is going to be. Because the Sakonnet River is really not that wide, and it would be devastating whatever they do.

And for the person who wants to stop global warming, we need the whole world to do that, not just Portsmouth, Rhode Island. Not just the Sakonnet River. We need China. We need Russia. We need Ukraine. We need every country in the

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nation to work together to do this. It's not going to be on Portsmouth's back.

How wide of a trench will it be? And
how -- the question for you is, how are you getting -- what are you getting your
recommendations from? Who are you getting
information from to make an intelligent decision on whether or not you should move forward? Can you answer that right now? No? Okay.

So I would hope that this isn't a done deal. I would hope that this really is true, that we do have a say in what's going to happen here and that someone really is going to listen to our questions and answer our questions and our concerns.

So really -- all we really need to know is one thing. I mean, this says it all.

Alternative $C$ was developed through scoping process for the draft EIS and response to comments received from National Marine Fisheries and other agencies expressing concern with the potential impact of the offshore export cable on fisheries, EFS, and habitat areas of particular concern, HAPC, in the Sakonnet River.

The Sakonnet River supports EFH for 16 fish species -- and I know it's a lot more. It's over a hundred species of fish and cod larvae. There's over a hundred species of fish in that river -- and has HAPCs for summer flounder and Atlantic cod.

To address this concern, BOEM, which is the Bureau of Ocean and Energy Management, developed onshore cable route options that would avoid placing offshore export cables in the Sakonnet River. Period. There is nothing else to talk about. They've already said that this is not a good idea. That we should look for an alternative route if we really have to do this.

So I would hope that you would really look toward the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and other organizations who are delving into the severity of the damage that could be done to our fisheries in the Sakonnet River, and hopefully, make the right decision and save our river. Thank you.

MR. GAGNON: The next speaker is
Mike Jarbeau.
MR. JARBEAU: Good evening. Mike Jarbeau,

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$J-A-R-B-E-A-U$, and $I$ am here tonight representing Save the Bay.

Save the Bay supports the responsible development of offshore wind and seeks to ensure that construction and operations prioritize protection of the bay and its natural systems at times. Climate change is not a future problem that some have mentioned. It's a current problem. It is here, and it is affecting Narragansett Bay. Offshore wind is an important part of transitioning away from fossil fuels. We have conducted an initial review of a dredge permit and water quality cert. Tonight's comments will hit on some of those key points, but we will be submitting formal, written comments before the deadline. Save the Bay questions whether it is appropriate for this permitting to be moving forward at this time, given the current lack of a power purchase agreement by the applicant, given project uncertainty, and given the permitting pause currently in place by the Rhode Island Energy Facility Siting Board and CRMC. The main problem this creates is a piecemeal, state-permitting process, which can hinder effective public

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participation, and that is concerning to us.
Additionally, we are concerned by the lack of sediment testing databases given the legacy of contaminants in the area, particularly in Mount Hope Bay and in the vicinity of the proposed horizontal directional drilling pits. Much of this historical contamination, including toxins like mercury, has been noted for decades and summarized in reports like the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program's most recent state of Narragansett Bay in the Watershed Report. We encourage DEM to ensure that there is recent data accurately characterizing the sediment proposed for disturbance so that any impact can be appropriately mitigated.

Save the Bay believes that, in order to be protective of the river, its inhabitants and its users, the applicant must make every effort to achieve a targeted 6-foot burial depth, limiting the need for secondary protection, and avoiding the most critical and important habitat in the Sakonnet River and Mount Hope Bay. This should be a priority for the applicant regardless of cost.

Finally, the scientific evidence also
demonstrates that the effectiveness that -- the
effectiveness of cable burial in reducing EMF, which further demonstrates need to achieve this 6-foot cable burial throughout the process and as much as possible through the cable burial procedure.

Thank you for your time. Have a good evening.

MR. GAGNON: The next speaker is Ed Allan.
MR. ALLAN: Good evening. My name is
Edward Allan, A-L-L-A-N. I currently reside at 26 Atlantic Avenue in Portsmouth. I've been there for eight years. Prior to that, I was at

81 Aquidneck Avenue in Portsmouth for 40 years.
Both my residences are within 200 feet of the Sakonnet River. I have spent many years swimming in the Sakonnet River and have firsthand knowledge about the quality of the water.

For both my residences, I was required to rework my septic system at a cost of between 20 and 30,000 dollars. And I'm not alone in that. There are many other people in this community who have had to do the same thing, at an extreme cost for some of them. It has worked. The water is cleaner.

I don't know if, after a project like this, it would still be cleaner. Rhode Island DEM required people, especially those with older systems, to put new systems in in order to clean the water. And I really have questions about this dredging. What it will do to the quality of the water.

I came here to learn what's going on. I came here because I wanted some questions answered. Unfortunately, from DEM, I am not learning anything. Thank you for your time.

MR. GAGNON: The next speaker is
Will Nakshian.
MR. NAKSHIAN: Hello. My name is
Will Nakshian, spelled, N-A-K-S-H-I-A-N. I'm a resident of Cumberland, and I'm a climate activist and a member of Climate Action Rhode Island. And I'm simply going to highlight some of the points the other members of my group have made tonight.

The only way to solve the climate crisis is to end the use of fossil fuels as rapidly as possible, and creating a new renewable energy infrastructure is the only path forward. Based on all the information I've learned, the impacts of
this dredging will have far less impact on our environment than the long-term impact of the climate crisis upon Rhode Island and the rest of the world.

Completion of this offshore wind project will benefit Rhode Island's economy by making us a leader in renewable energy, and it will help us make a leader in the green energy revolution. I urge you to pass this permit. Thank you.

MR. GAGNON: The next speaker is
Corey Forrest.
MS. WHEELER FORREST: Hi. My name is
Corey Wheeler-Forrest, $\mathrm{C}-\mathrm{O}-\mathrm{R}-\mathrm{E}-\mathrm{Y}, \mathrm{W}-\mathrm{H}-\mathrm{E}-\mathrm{E}-\mathrm{L}-\mathrm{E}-\mathrm{R}$, F-O-R-R-E-S-T. I'm a fourth-generation Portsmouth resident, I'm a fish dealer, and I've been a commercial fisherman out of Sakonnet Point for nearly 30 years.

Though I have experience in lobstering, gillnetting, and using fish pots, my primary occupation lies with my family's floating fish trap business, which is not only Rhode Island's oldest fishery but also a fishery unique to this state. My family has been trap fishing in the same waters and sites since the 1800 s.

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Aside from trap fishing being one of the cleanest and most sustainable ways to fish, the traditions, stories, knowledge, and culture has been passed down through centuries. This speaks volumes about our fisheries' long-term sustainability and how Rhode Island's fisheries are managed.

Regarding SouthCoast Wind's application to dredge the Sakonnet River and Mount Hope Bay, NOAA, in its comment to BOEM, expressed their land-based alternative to avoid the Sakonnet River, to reduce the impact on aquatic resources and designated habitat areas of particular concern. The CRMC also repeatedly urged them to look at an overland route for the cable to avoid the Sakonnet River because it is an essential fish habitat classified by the New England Fishery Management Council.

Every document concerning offshore wind, BOEM uses phrases like, quote, probably will be, anticipated to be, expected to be, and likely will be. Every document contains conjecture like this; conclusions formed based on incomplete information. And the opposite of what's probable, anticipated, likely, and expected is not discussed. In other

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words, no one knows what will happen. But there are far too many uncertainties, controversies, and questions for this uncharted, large-scale, long-term project to gain the momentum it already has.
U.S. fishermen are required, by law, to adhere to the strictest rules and regulations in the world. Our seafood must be caught according to fishery management plans that consider social and economic outcomes for fishing communities, prevent overfishing, rebuild depleted stocks, minimize bycatch and interactions with protected species, and identify and conserve essential fish habitat.

Just like the laws that govern, protect, and hold us accountable to keep our fishery sustainable, shouldn't offshore wind companies be required to adhere to these same standards? The invasive plan to cover our earth and oceans with wind turbines and cables based on conjecture at the expense of our ocean, food, and livelihoods, far exceeds any unknown, unproven benefit.

Rhode Island is the ocean state for a reason, and fishermen are a fundamental part of coastal communities and the backbone of our

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nation's food security and supply. Fishing in these waters is legacy and a practice that must be preserved for future generations, like we've always done. Offshore wind threatens to destroy it.

Thank you.
MR. GAGNON: The next speaker is
Abigail Brown.
MS. BROWN: Good evening. I am here -oh, Abigail, $A-B-I-G-A-I-L, B-R-O-W-N$.

I am here tonight representing the
Town of Portsmouth Harbor Commission. The Harbor Commission has put me to task to come before you. As the gentleman spoke earlier about the Algonquin Enbridge pipeline that's going across from east to west across the Sakonnet River, the Harbor Commission would like to ask you to please tell us how long or how deep your pipeline is going to interact with the pipeline that's going across the Sakonnet River, starting I believe next week. Thank you.

MR. GAGNON: The next speaker is
David Gleason.
MR. GLEASON: Good evening.
David Gleason, Portsmouth, Rhode Island.

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At the start of the meeting, I introduced myself to Mr. Gagnon and -- sorry if I mess up your last name -- DiBianco.

MR. LobIANCO: LoBianco.
MR. GLEASON: And asked exactly what people have asked tonight, will there be any questions answered. I was told this is just an information session -- I understand that -- and also there would be -- there is some information out in the hallway.

Just for the record, I did look for that information. There is none -- no information provided by DEM at this meeting tonight. I believe the information you referred to is probably from SouthCoast Wind. So, ultimately, I think a lot of people hope that the end result of giving testimony and asking questions, of which $I$ will also do, we will get some information from Rhode Island DEM.

Not unlike Rhode Island DOT, the
Town of Portsmouth has had their issues getting information from organizations affiliated with the state of Rhode Island. We all love the beautiful state of Rhode Island, but I will say the bureaucracy of upstate agencies that the State has,
has been troublesome in a lot of ways. Just look at our experience right now with the highways going through Providence.

It was mentioned about the Portsmouth
landfill, how that impacted our town. The notice of violation that we entered in with Rhode Island DEM to try and clean up our waters by forcing people to change their septic systems. All processes that have affected people here in Portsmouth.

So the next thing is we have a solution to somehow clean up the air by putting wind farms out to sea, which $I$ won't go into because no matter what we do and say here tonight, chances are that's going to happen. And it's a sad thing for me to think about, somebody that has solar panels on their house and believes in renewable energy, but I don't believe they belong out on fishing grounds. And that's what $I$ will think -- say the most about the Sakonnet River.

The area around Sandy Point Beach is the cleanest water that we have in the state of Rhode Island. The rest of the river is cleaner than probably most parts of Rhode Island. And

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putting any kind of cable down there and going through the jet-plow process, it puts our environment in jeopardy.

We have never done this before. We say it's been done around the world; it's never been done in the Sakonnet River. Will Rhode Island DEM be the agency that protects our citizens of Portsmouth and Rhode Island, Tiverton, all local people around that river, to ensure that it's going to be the same river after this process is done?

In general, it's been said, and I'll repeat it, that allowing for this permit is premature. The wind developer does not have any power purchase agreements. It's been said it's on hold with the Energy Facilities Siting Board and that's the reason. There's no power purchase agreements. The previous ones were with the state of Massachusetts with no benefit to the state of Rhode Island, but to the detriment of Rhode Island by having to come up with this low-cost method of, you know, transferring this energy to Brayton Point by coming down a pristine Sakonnet River.

So my questions are, what -- will
Rhode Island DEM look at the pros and cons of
putting a high-voltage cable down the river? Will we have that information? Do the pros outweigh the cons? Are there issues and dangers with dredging the pristine Sakonnet River? Has DEM looked at what's at the bottom of the river and

Mount Hope Bay? Do you know what's there? Are you looking at reports from previous studies? Do you have new studies? Will there be studies if you don't have any?

Basically, the bottom line for me is that
I don't believe this cable belongs in the Sakonnet River. There are other alternatives. You know, I think there are above-ground alternatives in the state of Massachusetts. Especially if they are receiving the end results of this power, they need to be explored. They have been explored.

It's cheaper to go down the river, and it's not the way to go. Thank you for your time.

MR. GAGNON: Next speaker, Sam LaRose.
MR. LaROSE: Hi. I'm Sam LaRose,
L-A-R-O-S-E.
I just want to say when it comes down to it, our world is built on ambitious projects, you know. That's what's kept us going as people. And

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when it comes down to it, if we all work on it together, we'll be able to do this with minimal impact. We'll be able to, you know, have good-paying jobs that support families and really just keep us all going.

In 1910, the world's population was estimated to be about 1.8 billion. Over a hundred years later we're about 8 billion people populationwise worldwide. Stopping development is not the answer. What we need to do is keep pushing forward and really push for the development that's going to make life sustainable. And this is the way we do it. Thank you for your time.

MR. GAGNON: The next speaker is
Rich Tully.
MR. TULLY: My name is Rich Tully, $\mathrm{T}-\mathrm{U}-\mathrm{L}-\mathrm{L}-\mathrm{Y}$.

I live down the hill here from the high school, on the Sakonnet River. I swim in those waters. I clam on my beach in front of my house. I fish in those waters. I sail in those waters. I'm also a member of Montaup. I'm on that golf course probably a hundred days a year.

I get that this project will probably have
some impact and certainly some inconvenience, and probably more for someone like me than most people because I live there. But I also get that there's other things going on in the world that this project aims to mitigate.

And I've got children and grandchildren on the way, and I'm concerned about their future. And as $I$ weigh the kind of inconvenience and impact of this project against the effects that global warming is having -- and $I$ can see that. There's a gentleman from Fogland Point who mentioned what global warming has been doing to this area recently.

In the last 14 months, I found four boats on my beach from four of the worst storms we've had here, in terms of beach erosion, in the last 20 years. And I've also seen what's happened to the waterfront on my property and my neighbors. I mean, these impacts are real.

Ten years ago, I used to see lobstermen dropping traps in front of my house. That doesn't happen anymore because of global warming. So I get that this project could have impacts, but the consequence of not doing projects like this also
has impacts, and they're real.
And I get we all have opinions about where we lean. I lean in favor of doing these kind of projects. I just think that's what's going to be best for my kids and my grandchildren. And by the way, I live on the water, and so will they. So thank you very much.

MR. GAGNON: The next speaker is Fred -and I believe it's Sousa, but I could be mispronouncing it. $S-W-O-R--F r e d ~ S w o r z$.

MR. LoBIANCO: He may have left early.
MR. GAGNON: We'll go on to the next name.
James Murray.
MR. MURRAY: Hello, everyone. My name is James Murray, J-A-M-E-S, $M-U-R-R-A-Y$.

I'm coming to say, as a commercial mariner who's worked on the water for ten years and a local small business owner that also works on boats in both the marine industrial, commercial, and recreational side of things, that $I$ vehemently oppose this cable running up the Sakonnet River.

My company that I worked for dredged Quonset Point back when we were doing that project, and we capped nuclear waste off of Block Island as
one of the dredge spots. I don't know if anybody has even thought of something like that as a study, but I have seen it firsthand.

As someone who's also on Sakonnet River almost every day, both for work and for pleasure, I know that, while we may not be able to stop the wind farms from happening, while it's going to benefit Massachusetts, you, as Rhode Island DEM, can stop the cables from coming into Rhode Island waters, period.

MR. GAGNON: Is Fred Sworz here or -- did he come back?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He's not outside either.

MR. GAGNON: Okay. Carol Mello.
MS. MELLO: That was me. I already spoke.
MR. GAGNON: Emil Cipolla.
MR. CIPOLLA: Thank you. I just came from another meeting so I apologize if the points I'm making have already been said. By the way, I'll email you a copy of this after.

I guess I'll start by giving the -- DEM is responsible for Rhode Island waters and soil. That's their area of jurisdiction. All the wind

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towers -- and there are eight blocks of a thousand towers each, and $I$ know most of you know this, that's under the jurisdiction of the federal government. So we have, in Rhode Island, have no authority and responsibility to say whether or not the sites are proper.

While there are a lot of important issues regarding the impact of mammals, fishing, the destruction, installation, operation, and end of life of these towers, and they're going to fall some day, that's not the issue in front of the DEM, correct? You only care about the -- basically, the water up the Sakonnet or Narragansett Bay. So the question is, not should the towers be implemented. That's not the issue today. The issue is, is there a better route or a better alternative than using the Sakonnet or Narragansett Bay. And I allege that there is.

Revolution $I$, as you know, has authority to run their cables basically south of Aquidneck Island and up Narragansett Bay on the west side. And they're going to do a landfall at Quonset Point, and all the energy is going to Quonset Point from Massachusetts. As the previous

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speaker said, Rhode Island will get no energy.
The current proposal is to run the cables up the Sakonnet, across Island Park, and then back under the water to Brayton Point. I assert that it would be less damage and less impact by going the southern route up the Narragansett Bay. The additional distance that the cable has got to go for SouthCoast, from Quonset Point to

Brayton Point, is a matter of miles, five or ten miles. There already is disruption of the lower half of West Passage, and there will be an ongoing tunnel from Providence to the rest of Narragansett Bay. So that soil, those contaminants are already impacted. So I assert any disruption -- additional disruption from cables from SouthCoast will be minimal.

And, oh, by the way, SouthCoast has a 23 million dollar post-community agreement. That's a nominal factor. The real numbers are probably in the range of 10 million if you do a net present value. My point is that any additional cost that SouthCoast would have to implement would be more than offset by the not having to pay the post-community agreement of 10 or 20 million.

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So, therefore, I would recommend that you use either one of two routes. Do the same thing that Revolution $I$ is doing or go to New Bedford where that's -- that would be the exit point, again, because the power is going primarily to Massachusetts. So my recommendation is to not do the Sakonnet River route but either one of two routes; the west point or New Bedford. Thank you. MR. GAGNON: So we don't have any further names that have signed up to speak. Is there anyone that would like to speak that hasn't signed up or --

MR. CARCELLER: My name is Sal Carceller, $C-A-R-C-E-L-L-E-R$. And $I$ will state that I'm not for putting the cable up the Sakonnet for a lot of the reasons you heard so I'm not going to reiterate those, but I am going to say that tonight you mentioned that this is about the DEM and the responsibility of $D E M$ in protecting our waterway. So I'd like to pose the question to the DEM. Would we be here if this electrical cable was being supplied electricity from a nuclear power plant? Would we be here if this was a pipe to carry oil? And I like to ask, does it matter? Does it really
matter?
What is your job at the DEM? Is your job to concern yourself whether it's a clean energy project, which -- or a dirty energy project? The reality is, it's our river we're talking about. It's the impact to the river. It should not matter whether that electrical cable is going to carry the wind farm power or a nuclear power plant.

Now, I like to pose that none of us know what comes down the road. It is very possible that 20 years from now we will have fission a reality and that cable could be used for something else. And it will be used for something else. We also hear about oil and how it's bad. And sure it's bad, but I'm going to tell you something I think I've learned in my near 60 years here. As long as there is oil beneath our feet, it will be extracted.

So while I agree that maybe oil is the problem, you know when the problem goes away? When all the oil goes away. So I just ask the DEM to please do not pass judgment on whether or not you're going to put that cable in that river because it's a feel-good project because tomorrow
that cable could be used for something else, and the precedent will be set that we could put a different type of cable in there. Something to carry oil or gas.

Now, my background's electrical. I've
never really heard of too many projects of 300,000-plus volts. This isn't just volts AC. This is volts DC. I ask -- I know there's some in the world -- how many have been run down a narrow river like that of 300,000 plus in two lines? I actually feel, just from my electrical background -- you may laugh at me -- but a gas line in that river is actually safer than that electrical line because a gas line only presents a threat to us if it leaks. An electrical line leaks every single time. Once you turn those electrons on, it is leaking. There is nothing you can do to stop that leak.

So I ask again to DEM, please do not pass judgment on a river because everybody thinks it's a feel-good project. I think your job is to judge is dredging a pit in that river worthwhile, regardless of what you're going to put in the pit. Thank you.

MR. ROBERTS: Peter Roberts,
$R-O-B-E-R-T-S$.
Okay. I want to bring up Brayton Point. When I used to ride across the Braga Bridge, I would see over there all the growth was brown. No green. And then they re-did the stacks. As soon as they re-did the stacks, everything was green again. All green leaves.

The problem is they haven't done any maintenance on anything. And in New Orleans, they did the same thing with a place down there where they cleaned the stacks, and then, instead of what was coming out of there, it was reduced to gas emissions. The problem is they do not take care of things. That's what it's all about.

Another thing, so many people talk about global warming. Global warming in Rhode Island is done at $T F$ Green Airport. And when all the records were set, that was back when there was only prop planes there, and many of them are still there. Now, how many jets do they have coming in and out of there on a regular basis? Eight to 12? Back then, when it used to be prop planes, it was only three or four. And not as many coming in and out.

That's where the record highs are set. Do you understand how much heat is put out of jet planes? It's unbelievable that people are falling for this. And, you know, you've got to look at the records and really get the facts out. Everybody's hiding this. They're hiding every bit of it. And on land, if our government helped everybody get solar panels, you would cut down a lot of this. You'd cut it over in half. This is not being brought up. This is what you really need to look into. They are hiding all this. They don't talk about it.

And lately, most of the global warming has been in the '40s. Let's go out to the western side of the country. Storms, dust storms, that was back in the '30s. Those records have not been broken. So all this has been here for a long time. They're all using this to get what they want. And most of the people are such big idiots, they don't get it.

MR. GAGNON: Okay. Any further public comment from anyone?

MR. MULDER: My name is Ken Mulder, M-U-L-D-E-R. I'm a resident here in Portsmouth. I grew up here, moved away for a while, came back
home.
I have heard a lot of people say tonight that the river is a pristine environment. I'm sorry, folks, it's not. It hasn't been since prior to the industrial revolution. The pollutants that were put into our waterways starting in the 1800 s are still there. It's not pristine. It is cleaner than it has ever been in my lifetime of 50 years. And running a cable up that river is going to disturb all of that sediment and release a lot of those pollutants into our waterways once again.

I sat in this auditorium a month ago when they passed the host agreement. The question was requested of Ørsted, had they done core samples. They said no. They were planning on it, but they had not done it. We do not know what is there.

We know we have PCBs from the Navy on the other side of the island. We know we have heavy metals. We know we have mercury. We know we have tons and tons of contaminants that, I'm sorry, yes, global warming, whether you believe it or not, I don't care; we should all want the environment to be as clean as possible. That's number one. That starts at home.

Dredging this river is not going to help global warming. It is not going to help any of the situations. The only thing it can possibly do, if those contaminants are there, are destroy what we have tried to put back to the way it's supposed to be for the last $40,50,60,70$ years.

There was an overland route going through Massachusetts. This was cheaper and a lot of communities in Mass. said no. So this is the way that they want to go. But they could afford to cancel their contract and pay a multimillion dollar fine? Well, they could have used that money for a better route than destroying our waterways. Thank you very much.

MR. GAGNON: Any further people like to speak?

MS. KOZIARA: I just want to ask one question. I don't know if you can answer any questions. Maybe somebody out here knows. Hello. Martha $\mathrm{K}-\mathrm{O}-\mathrm{Z}-\mathrm{I}-\mathrm{A}-\mathrm{R}-\mathrm{A}$.

Who is responsible for ensuring that Ocean Wind, which is the primary, SouthCoast Wind is the junior partner in this, but who or what entity is responsible for holding their feet to the

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fire, making sure that they comply with all environmental mandates? Is there an entity? Does DEM do that or -- does anybody know? Who's in charge? Does anybody know? Yes, sir.

MR. CIPOLLA: The federal -- one of the issues of license --

COURT REPORTER: I'm not going to be able to hear you. If you want it on the record, you've got to come back.

MR. CIPOLLA: It's the feds.
MS. KOZIARA: So as you say, sir, there's some federal entity that would be the overseer of this, ensuring that they followed whatever --

MR. CIPOLLA: The contractor says they will do best effort. There's no guarantee for a -COURT REPORTER: A what kind of bond?

It's very difficult to hear.
MR. GAGNON: Sir, we have to stick to the person who's giving the comments. Your comments are on the record, and we will have to respond when we --

MS. KOZIARA: Yeah. I'm just wondering if, in fact, there is an entity that oversees all of this. And what if they decide -- what if the

Ocean Wind or SouthCoast Wind decides that they just, for whatever reason, financial, whatever, they don't feel like doing it a particular way?

I know that a month ago when we were here at that meeting, as it was explained to us, basically, Portsmouth signed away its rights. Is that right, Mr. Gleason, Portsmouth signed away their rights to complain or take umbrage with or contest any of the factors involved in that agreement?

So if they're not going to be held accountable, then why would they do what they're supposed to do? So if you don't mind, would you put that down. Thank you.

MR. GAGNON: Do you want to --
MR. CIPOLLA: Do you want me to respond?
MR. GAGNON: No, that's okay. We have your comments.

MR. LoBIANCO: You folks can certainly discuss afterwards.

MS. PEDRO: My name is Elizabeth Pedro.
I'm from Portsmouth, Rhode Island.
COURT REPORTER: Spell your last name.
MS. PEDRO: P-E-D-R-O. And I just want to
go on record as saying that $I$ do not agree that this cable should come down the Sakonnet River for many of the reasons that have already been stated, so $I$ won't go into them.

I do particularly agree that the dredging is premature. We don't know -- we don't even know if this company is going to go out of business and then you've already done all this dredging and God knows what to the river. So $I$ just wanted to say that I'm not for the cable coming down the river. Thank you.

MR. GAGNON: Any further people who haven't spoken yet? Sorry, sir, we have one person who hasn't spoken yet.

MR. CROCKFORD: Hey there. My name is
Cam Crockford. I'm from Island Park.
COURT REPORTER: Spell your last name.
MR. CROCKFORD: $\mathrm{C}-\mathrm{R}-\mathrm{O}-\mathrm{C}-\mathrm{K}-\mathrm{F}-\mathrm{O}-\mathrm{R}-\mathrm{D}$. I grew up on Cedar Avenue.

I'm just touching base on what a lot of people have kind of voiced here tonight, especially in regards to septic systems and cost of maintenance of those and how our whole community puts forth the effort to maintain those, install
them so we can live here.
I've also had to deal with CRMC, along with DEM, in regards to construction of seawalls to preserve our properties down there in Island Park, and how difficult that process is as well; also, on the backs of what people have mentioned with all the bad storms we've been having. Clearly things have changed in this new generation of global warming and how that's been advancing and affecting our neighborhoods and our environment.

The flooding that happens down there at Island Park. You know, we didn't really used to see that happen back when $I$ was a kid, and that's only 20 years ago. And now it's a regular occurrence. The whole neighborhood gets flooded. So we live with that. And so we understand that environmental global warming and the effects of that are very real.

However, we live on the waterfront. We live in the ocean state. And we live here because we enjoy the ocean, the bay, the river, and how beautiful that is. I'm on the water as much as I can. And we just ask CRMC and DEM to protect our water and give these wind farms as much of a hard
time as they give us just to live here. And that's not too much to ask.

And with these wind farms pulling the wool over everyone's eyes with this green washing, saying how great it's going to be, they don't have to live here, they don't have to deal with the effects of digging up Boyds Lane and Anthony Road, probably that construction is going to go on for God knows how long and then ripping up our bay.

And we just hope DEM can put as much work and effort in to protecting our water and giving them a hard time as much as they give our local residents a hard time. For good reasons. Thank you.

MR. GAGNON: Any further comments? Anyone else? Go ahead.

MR. CIPOLLA: Fourth time I stood up.
COURT REPORTER: I'm going to need your name again.

MR. CIPOLLA: I may not have made myself clear.

MR. GAGNON: Would you give your name for the stenographer.

MR. CIPOLLA: Emil Cipolla. The issue

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before us is not whether the wind farms will be installed. That's the feds' decision because it's on the continental shelf. So the Bureau of Energy -- Ocean Energy Management has decided to grant permits to those eight developers. So I think I'm correct in saying your only jurisdiction and authority is to say where -- what's the impact if the cables go up on Rhode Island waters; is that correct? Right? You have no say whether or not these projects are going to be built, correct?

Okay. So that's got to be clear. So you have some good points, but this is the wrong forum to express those. You got to take it up with the feds. And I suggest you look at the Bureau of Engineering Ocean Management website, and you will see that all the contracts are written to say the developer will do best effort to be responsible. There is no insurance bond, there's no escrow account. There's no annuity that's guaranteed by the developer, signed off by the feds. So call your congressman. Call your senator. Not these gentlemen. Does that answer your question?

MS. KOZIARA: Yes. Now I'm depressed.
MR. GAGNON: Another comment?

MR. KESSON: Yes.
MR. GAGNON: Okay.
MR. KESSON: I hope. Paul Kesson,
Portsmouth, Rhode Island.
COURT REPORTER: What's your last name?
MR. KESSON: Kesson, $K-E-S-S-O-N$.
So I have a bunch of mixed notes here. Being a resident of Portsmouth, I wish this was entering into Burrillville. I'd have no concern myself. But we can't have that attitude of not in our backyard.

My question is this, I've lived through two wind turbines in the town of Portsmouth. The first one failed inside of a thousand hours. And that dumped a lot of material on the ground around the turbine, which the Town owned. That second one, it's also failed. What is DEM going to do to notify the people that a hazard happened? Okay.

In the last -- in the last two turbine failures, we've had large supplies of lubricant that have sprayed out. I have photos of the turbines. There's no notification to the town. In light of that, what notification will Rhode Island DEM use to inform the people in the

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town of Portsmouth of a failure of either a wind turbine or any hazard from this installation because it's not if the cable is going to fail, it's when. Okay. So what's DEM going to do?

The reason for the question is not for me as a resident, as I'm 72 years old talking here tonight, but more about the children who can't stand at this microphone. And the reason I state it this way is we've heard we have a pristine river again. It's better than it was. It never was good. Fall River still dumps waste into the river. It comes down, it still closes, still has a tendency to close the bay.

Those are layers in the bottom of the river. The disturbance of this dredging is going to do that. Do you guys have a calculation of how much tonnage of hazard is going to be put into the water column? Do you have a method, as with the tank farms, you did test borings, so you knew what the hazards were in the path. Has RIDEM done that testing? Has RIDEM done the testing in extensive where it's going to land base in Island Park?

You're going to horizontal bore from some distance from the beach through another hazardous
waste that you just made the Town cap. Those are going to be six highways to the river for the six cables. Are you going to be measuring the hazardous waste? Because when we were told, when we had to change our septic systems out, that the water moves sideways about a foot a year. And since 1957, the hazards from Island Park have been moving to the beach. You've now opened a highway because you've done a horizontal bore.

You've given -- you've taken away the compaction that's in the earth that's caused by the glacier of just time, and you're now going to allow the hazards to come back to the beach. Is DEM installing monitoring stations? Are they going to monitor the water in the dredge area to notify the residents?

Has DEM done an aquatic survey to know what's out there in the first 12 inches of the top to know if it's going to change the aquatic life, the marine life that's in the bay, the marine life that's in the river? Do you have examples of what a failed cable is going to do, the plasma that's going to happen at 374,000 volts? I've got 45 years doing electrical services for the Navy.

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Thirteen thousand five, when that cable actually failed. At thirteen thousand five, we had flames three stories high. Granted it was in the air. It wasn't in the water.

How are you going to -- how are you going to protect the child that's not here tonight at the boundary where we transition from a wet cable to land? What is that safety zone? How are you going to protect the residents? RIDEM, that's your requirement. When thirteen thousand five travels three stories high, until National Grid finally gave up, we had a fire for a half an hour. What are you doing to protect people on the beach from Friday, Saturday, Sunday, all through the summer?

DEM's requirement is to make sure that can't happen. You're here to protect the people in the town of Portsmouth, the people from Fall River, the people from Tiverton. 13,000 volts is nothing compared to 375,000. The problem is they're going to sit six cables. The distance apart is going to cause the cable to fail. The water environment does it to everything.

What is DEM going to do to protect the people on the beach, in the water for whatever

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you've determined the distance is that it's safe? Is it halfway down the river? I'd really like to know from your test borings -- I'd like to see -- I would like to see your test borings -- I would like to know what contaminants they are disturbing. I would like to know what you think the tonnage of those -- those disturbed chemicals are when they dredge the bay and what you believe the impact is going to be. Because now it's not 6 feet down, it's not clean like we have today. It goes back 50, 60 years we're going to set the river back until it gets covered again. Paul Kesson, Portsmouth, Rhode Island.

MR. GAGNON: Any further public comment? (NO RESPONSE)

MR. GAGNON: Going once. Okay. Thank you very much for attending tonight, and this will be the close of the public comment. As a reminder, we will be accepting written comments until March 7th. Thank you.
(MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:14 P.M.)
C ERTIFICATE
I, Cindy M. Tangney, a Commissioner in and
for the State of Rhode Island, hereby certify that
the foregoing pages are a true and accurate record
of my stenographic notes that were reduced to print
through computer-aided transcription.
In witness whereof, I hereunto set my hand
this 13th day of March, 2024 .
CINDY M. TANGNEY, RMR
My Commission (RI) Expires on $06 / 30 / 2025$

|  | actual (2) | against (3) | alter (1) | approval (2) |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| A | 25:20;26:15 | 18:15;22:8;71:9 | 25:12 | 22:18;28:10 |
|  | actually (7) | agencies (4) | alterations (1) | approve (3) |
| Abbey (1) | 23:14;24:18;25:24; | 39:13;50:4;56:20; | 25:3 | 20:9;32:3;37:4 |
| 21:4 | 28:2;78:11,13;92:1 | $66: 24$ | alternative (8) | approved (4) |
| Abbey's (1) | add (1) | agency (3) | 47:6,10,18,20; | 14:4;20:1,5;26:15 |
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