

GUEST VIEW

'Green grab' is under way

Federal government gets behind radical progressive agenda

By E.J. Smith

You got firsthand evidence last month of a new beginning in the government green grab. Leading the Obama green initiative, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar announced the approval for Cape Wind, a 130-wind-turbine farm off the southern coast of Cape Cod. It is a new beginning for the radical progressive movement's (RPM's) idealistic green dream, which will dig a deeper hole in taxpayers' pockets. This should come as no surprise to those of you who have been paying attention.

Let me be clear. I am all for renewable energy. But the feeling I'm getting about Cape Wind is that this is less about the environment and more about equal justice and the redistribution of your wealth.

Don't be deceived by the argument that Cape Wind helps our energy independence from foreign oil; oil is used more for transportation, not generating electricity. As it stands today, oil is a very small player in electricity generation. Coal is the country's main source of electricity, followed by natural gas. In order to control costs, America's primary focus should be on energy efficiency, natural gas and clean coal. Wind is expensive. It's worth noting that Denmark derives about 20 percent of its electricity from wind power, and its electricity costs are roughly three times higher than those in the U.S.

The RPM green grab was laid out on paper years ago, and they have been patiently waiting until their men were in place. Look no further than the chapter "Building a Vibrant Low-Carbon Economy" in "Change for America: A Progressive Blueprint for the 44th President," where Bracken Hendricks and



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former green jobs czar Van Jones write, "The best way to address our climate and energy crises is to build a more prosperous green economy—strong enough to lift millions of Americans out of poverty and into a stronger middle class."

Salazar's approval of Cape Wind, and its support from Obama friend and Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick, opens the floodgates for future projects. It's the first federally sponsored coastal wind farm. Having sailed my entire life in these waters, I question the placement not only because of my own bias, which of course exists (and I'll get to that in a minute), but from a common-sense point of view. Much better wind is further offshore. Choosing this location is like having one productive oil well when the Saudi Arabia of wind is farther offshore.

You might be thinking, well, Smith doesn't want wind turbines in his backyard. And that's true, I don't. But imagine for a moment, if you will, what it's like to live in New England. For better or worse, you get a sense of being enclosed here, by close neighborhoods, tight winding roads and limited access to the water, which may come as a surprise to some. We don't all have waterfront views. Yes, there are places to escape to for an open Midwest feeling, but for many of us the ocean is the one great

escape enjoyed by all. It's the biggest reason this area is a top 10 destination for tourists.

Proponents will argue that the wind turbines will be five miles offshore and barely visible from land. But imagine putting these barely visible wind turbines along the Grand Canyon, Yosemite or Yellowstone. How unthinkable is that? The expanse of the open ocean is part of what makes the ocean views of New England a national treasure. Believe me, if you sail from Woods Hole to Nantucket, they'll be more than barely visible.

Government transparency is lacking with Cape Wind. Which reminds me, have you ever seen a wind turbine not working on a windy day? I see it all the time in Portsmouth. It's anecdotal evidence, but it tells me that the nameplate capacity of these wind turbines will be well above what they actually generate. They surely aren't going to run 24/7.

Have you ever seen what salt water does to mechanical parts? Imagine the taxpayer-funded maintenance costs this saltwater wind farm will create. Electricity prices are not going to fall for Massachusetts — at least, not without help from the rest of America through subsidies and tax credits. Estimates put Massachusetts tax credits at \$1 billion and an additional \$300 million from federal production tax credits. The break-even point is years from now.

With the Cape Wind approval, Salazar is in essence giving the green light to a controversial wind farm, while holding back the development of one of our most abundant and affordable energy sources: natural gas. Is Rhode Island Sound next?