

Jay Mann

## It's the Great Outdoors And Then Not So Much

World's Worst Gas Accompanies Turbines

The mountain laurels are out of their bloom' minds, which is a wonderful thing. jumpsuits. Just kidding! I have apinary friends ... who

itch from a tick's anticoagulant.

Among the ticks tapping me for a blood donation are the smallest ones I've ever seen. It would take five or more to form a period on this page, though I have the damndest time keeping them in a tight circle. Hey, I told ya I've pulled a load of ticks off me this spring.

Now onward to an essential wind turbine section.

**THEY'RE ALL THAT:** When the likes of Danish renewable energy group Ørsted planned massive wind turbine projects off the Eastern Seaboard, they expected to be greeted with open arms and "kiss my baby" responses by Americans. They figured we were color coordinated when it comes to renewable energy, convinced that green goes well with red, white and blue. Unbeknownst to the outsiders, our nation's color preferences also have a dedicated ocean-blue tint, a hue we hold sacred, coastally speaking.

For Ørsted and those of an offshore wind energy persuasion, things in New Jersey have taken an unexpected and decidedly inopportune turn. Acute public opposition to their proposed farms, particularly from the populace of Long Beach Island and Cape May County (see below), has thoroughly shocked Mads Nipper, Ørsted's CEO. Nonetheless, his company and others banking big on turbine arrays raking in billions' worth of America's other favorite green are not willing to withdraw from the waters they paid dearly to conquer during initial negotiations.

In the face of upwardly ratcheting Garden State public-deep opposition, wind power heavies Ørsted and Atlantic Shores Wind Energy

offer fluke and, in the case of this father and son, an arriving kingfish or two.

have hit the hush, hush, sweet Charlotte button. Getting answers from either company has become futile. This reticence is among the issues irking Cape May County.

Last week, somewhat-neighboring Cape May County went into quite the lambast mode. In a resolution heretofore unseen in the state, its board of commissioners as much as ordered Ørsted to take a long oceanic hike.

In the resolution, mention was made of the United States Bureau of Ocean Energy's admitting "the construction of multiple offshore wind projects along the East Coast of the United States will have little to no positive impact on global warming and climate change."

Also mentioned in the county's diatribe was a Harvard University study foreseeing offshore turbine arrays reducing sea breezes, leading to warmer sea surface temperatures.

"The Harvard study also concludes that the construction and operation of offshore wind industry electric power generation facilities will have a more substantial negative impact on climate change than oil and coal over the next decade," reads the resolution, which also goes to great length to emphasize potential damage to its lifeblood tourism industry.

Cape May accuses Ørsted and its "partners at the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities" of using the New Jersey Offshore Wind Economic Development Act to "push aside" county and local elected officials, while ignoring public objections and concerns.

As to how far Cape May County is willing to go, the board of commissioners has authorized the use of significant county resources to legally oppose the Ørsted windmill projects.

Board of Commissioners Director Len Desiderio remarked in the resolution, "As time went by, it became clear that Ørsted was not interested

in finding any compromise. It is clear to us now that the approach among this foreign corporation and their partners in the state and federal governments is to build these things as fast as they can despite the potential for devastating environmental and economic impacts."

**NOW TO SOME SPOOKY TURBINE CHEMISTRY:** Try as you may, you likely can't be certain you've ever heard of sulfur hexafluoride, SF6. It is a common gas used in the high-voltage electrical realm. It insulates and controls the flow of current.

Very little planetary brightness wafts forth with this gas. It has the bleak distinction of being the singularly worst greenhouse gas the atmosphere must field. And turbines are rife with the stuff.

In an article titled "The Greenwashing of Offshore Wind," researcher Linda Bonvie writes, "Perhaps the most incongruously dirty aspect of this supposedly clean, green energy is the utilization of the most potent and persistent greenhouse gas known to man, sulfur hexafluoride, which is used both in the turbines and onshore and offshore (substations)."

Just last month, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reported, "SF6 is the most potent greenhouse gas known. It is 23,500 times more effective at trapping infrared radiation than an equivalent amount of CO2 and stays in the atmosphere for 3,200 years."

The agency also notes a relatively small amount can "have a significant impact on global climate change" and that leaks can occur during "installation, maintenance and servicing, and decommissioning" of turbines.

SF6 leakage has already reared up. As Bonvie reports, "In June of 2022, 80 workers at the Seagreen offshore wind area in the North Sea were forced to evacuate their rig when around 24 pounds of SF6 leaked, as revealed by a representative of an EU union group to the media. The question remains, he noted, of how many such leaks go unreported."

As to how much sulfur hexafluoride would come into play within N.J.'s projected turbine farms, Ørsted's Ocean Wind site will incorporate 243 pounds per wind turbine generator, with large amounts going into each of up to three offshore substations.

Atlantic Shores, disguising SF6 as merely a "switchgear, electrical insulator/arc suppressor," would also use 243 pounds of the gas per turbine, with its offshore substations using up to 9,480 pounds.

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An onshore substation could use up to 11,000 pounds of SF6.

Of note, both companies admit they're looking for cleaner alternatives.

