

## **Building A Sustainable Future for the Seacoast**

Anyone who has thought seriously about global warming/climate disruption knows that we need to make huge changes in our fuel sources and energy systems if we and our descendants are to simply survive economic and environmental disruptions in coming decades. At the same time, it is clear that continued reliance on a militarized economy (nationally as well as locally) is not sustainable or life-affirming. In particular, our local naval shipyard continues to devote huge financial and human resources, not to mention key waterfront real estate, to the maintenance and refueling of weapons of mass destruction, i.e. nuclear attack submarines, that were designed for the Cold War and are of questionable value in future conflicts. And those future conflicts will likely be fought over the very resources and human needs that are critically affected by global warming - as even the US Dept. of Defense (DOD) warns.

Fortunately, a vision of a more sustainable future has been coming into focus in the past few years right here on the coast of the Gulf of Maine. It involves the installation of hundreds of huge offshore wind turbines, which the US Dept. of Energy calculates could feasibly provide most of the electric power our fuel-poor region needs, within a couple decades. The State of Maine has already set a goal of 5 gigawatts (that's four Seabrook plants, or five times what all of New Hampshire uses most days) worth of power from offshore wind turbines by 2030, more than enough to power the whole state AND provide the power for conversion to all-electric vehicles and residential heating. And of course other promising related technologies like tidal and wave power will likely be developed in conjunction with this effort. And all that technology-building, staging and maintenance needs to be conducted from somewhere with a lot of infrastructure, not to mention a skilled workforce and history of government support, right here somewhere on the coast, with a good harbor and a lot of underutilized waterfront....

So, Seacoast Peace Response proposes a campaign to begin a serious community conversation concerning a phased-in conversion of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard into a wind turbine and other marine renewable technology research, fabrication and maintenance facility. The Shipyard is ideally suited to play a key role in the development and installation of large offshore wind and other renewable technologies. It of course contains significant waterfront industrial infrastructure, including docks and dry docks, heavy lift cranes, warehouses and fabrication facilities, along with an existing workforce trained in marine technology engineering, construction/repair and maintenance.

Most importantly, the US Navy has an up-and-running program for potential public-private development projects, the Enhanced Use Leasing program, that was designed for this very application. On the national level, the DOD has ordered all military branches to increase their renewable-energy use to 25 percent of total consumption by 2025. With a \$24 billion overall energy bill, DOD support for renewable energy technologies could provide a huge boost for research and development, as well as overall demand for these technologies, as it has in the past for transistors, the internet and other key technological developments.

This type of development could enable the transition over the next decade of a military-based local economy to one powerfully tied to the necessary conversion to a sustainable power system for our country. We simply can't survive a future full of the dangers of nuclear power and climate-disrupting carbon pollution, courtesy of nuclear powered submarines, the Seabrook power plant and coal plants among local sources. To avoid this fate, we have to demand clean energy, green jobs and peace-promoting technology. We can jumpstart our promised green economy right here in our own community.

Such an effort would be long and challenging, but may be achievable and ties together a broad number of issues of concern to many people in our region. It would also send a powerful message to the state, the country and the world: Green Economy, not war economy – time to build our sustainable future!

For more information or to submit comments, concerns, or suggestions, please contact Doug Bogen at [dbogen@metrocast.net](mailto:dbogen@metrocast.net).