



Letter in support of South Terminal Wind Project
Desa Van Laarhoven (on behalf of Desa, from Brooke)
To: Group South-Terminal-Draft-Comments

08/08/2012 02:09 PM

To Whom It May Concern,

Attached you will find my letter of support for the South Terminal Project in New Bedford. I had attended the meeting in New Bedford but was unable to speak due to the large number of speakers. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,
Desa

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Desa Van Laarhoven

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Think of giving not as a duty but as a privilege. --John D. Rockefeller Jr.

The Marion Institute provides support and insight to emerging initiatives that make a profound difference in the world. Their work does not show up at the head of the parade, but is often the reason there is a parade at all. The Institute shows up early and presciently to bring forth the most innovative people and projects in the world. --
Paul Hawken



- South Terminal Project.pdf



August 8, 2012

Dear esteemed EPA,

I write this letter in hopes to urge you to approve the New Bedford Marine Commerce Terminal. I am a community member, native of this region, and care deeply about the well-being of the people of New Bedford and the SouthCoast. I did not have the pleasure of reading this testimony at the hearing as there were many people there expressing their support for this project. During this tumultuous time of humanity's fate, I hope you can help us work towards a solution and I feel this wind project is part of the solution. Please call me if you have any questions or concerns and I look forward to hearing your answer on the status of this project.

Below is what I was going to read at the hearing. I thank you for your consideration and wisdom.

- **The Arctic Sea ice has the greatest June loss on record.**
- **20 million people have been displaced in Bangladeshi flooding.**
- **72% of our nation is currently dry/draught ridden.**
- **Ukraine, Europe's largest corn grower, expects yields to fall 23% in the heat.**

These are just a few frightening statistics that Bill McKibben has compiled from news reports over the last several weeks. Bill McKibben has been the leading environmentalist and activist on climate change over the past 30 years. He is also a dear friend to the Marion Institute and New Bedford.

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Desa Van Laarhoven and I am the Executive Director of the Marion Institute which is a nonprofit dedicated to identifying, promoting and incubating programs and serendipity projects that seek to find a solution for the root cause of an issue, both on local and global levels. We have 20 programs and projects around the world that seek to create deep and positive change in the realms of sustainability and social justice.

These statistics are sobering and frightening because they have become our new reality. Each day we hear news of new record high temps or an environmental catastrophe that destroys a community. And we can only presume that these events will be even more frequent and at a greater magnitude of destruction as we sit back and do nothing. I am here today to urge you all to take a step in the right direction by bringing renewable green energy to New Bedford.

The Marion Institute and the City of New Bedford

The Marion Institute's relationship with the Whaling City came about as an organic evolution. Eight years ago, our programs were flourishing in 5 different countries but we did not have a solid relationship with the SouthCoast. We began to look at our own behaviors and how the United States affects the world-wide community. It is estimated that the U.S. represents only 5% of the world's population yet we consume 30% of the world's resources and create 30% of the world's waste. Knowing this fact, we quickly realized that if we wanted to make the biggest difference globally, we needed to begin in our own backyard. From this thinking, we brought the Connecting for Change: A Bioneers by the Bay Conference to the SouthCoast at UMass Dartmouth, initially. The conference seeks to create change by discussing our world's problems and offering viable solutions to the community.

As the conference grew in attendance, we needed a setting that would be more visible and accessible to all. Cities, with lower carbon footprints than the suburbs, put Providence and New Bedford on the table as both promising options. Even though the move to Providence would have provided the Marion Institute with more funding avenues, we decided that we needed to settle down roots in our immediate community and help restore New Bedford's vibrancy by creating awareness on pressing issues and providing opportunities in the forms of education, sustainability, community building, and employment.

The Marion Institute recognizes that today's youth are needed to hold the torch as leaders in sustainability. We believe that diversity is the key to nature's success, therefore, the more diverse our problem solvers are, the more sustainability and social justice issues will be solved. Inner city youth need to be part of the solution and this means that all need to be at the table, regardless of race, class, sex, or religion. Our programs span the ages of primary school through young adulthood, intercepting young people while their ideas and values are forming all the way to centennials.

Currently we have 3 programs in New Bedford:

The first program is POWER.

POWER (People Organizing for Wealth and Ecological Restoration) originated from our partnership with the City of New Bedford and our team, which includes native New Bedford residents. The program was created to address the gaps that are currently inhibiting the development of a robust and sustainable green economy in the City of New Bedford and surrounding regions, with an initial focus on energy efficiency and our spiritual connection to the earth. POWER addresses the gaps that are currently inhibiting the development of a market-based, sustainable and inclusive green economy in the region. By localizing jobs and creating green energy, we reduce our dependency on foreign oil, therefore reducing our carbon footprint.

As Van Jones would say, "The green economy should not just be about reclaiming throw-away stuff. It should be about reclaiming thrown-away communities. It should not just be about recycling things to give them a second life. We should also be gathering up people and giving them a second chance."

The second program is the Sustainability Education Initiative.

SEI deepens the understanding and practice of sustainability within the New Bedford school system. SEI works to empower schools with the tools and tool kits to create a more sustainable school through gardening, recycling, composting and curriculum resources. Recently, SEI wrapped up its pilot program at Hayden McFadden with the first grade to focus on food access and knowledge. The results will inform amendment recommendations to the district's federally mandated wellness policy.

The third program is Connecting for Change: A Bioneers by the Bay Conference.

(CFC) is an annual three-day, solutions based gathering held in downtown New Bedford. Entering into its 8th year, this internationally acclaimed event summons environmental, industry and social justice innovators to bring focus on food and farming, health and healing, green business, indigenous knowledge, women and youth empowerment, spirituality and sustainability, all working to catalyze a movement to heal our world. Every October, the conference brings together a diverse audience of nearly 3,000 people of all backgrounds, races, and creeds, to create deep and positive change in their communities. Nearly one third of the participants in this event are young people who attend on scholarship.

It just makes sense for the Marion Institute to support the construction of wind turbines in our region. We believe in an equitable future for the generations to come – complete with clean air, low energy costs, and green jobs. With rising sea levels, unsustainable carbon emissions, and our indefensible dependency on foreign oil, we know that now is the time to take the necessary steps towards clean energy. We wish to restore a healthy balance to our diverse community by mimicking nature – using diversity as a tool to explore alternatives to our unsustainable practices when it comes to energy, our economy, and our environment. Wind turbines are the next step in curbing our energy consumption, creating jobs, and caring for our communities. While not a perfect system, we know that doing

nothing is simply not an option at this juncture. We hope that the officials will take the necessary steps to bring New Bedford to the pinnacle of clean energy and green job creation in the nation.

Bill McKibben will be here in October as a keynote speaker at our Connecting for Change Conference and has been to New Bedford several times with the Marion Institute. He believes that **"Jobs don't come any greener for this--it's quite wonderful to think of New Bedford, once the staging ground for taking oil from the sea in the form of whales, now could be the ground zero for harnessing the ocean breezes. Each era brings its great opportunities, and in our time this is a chance to make a difference both to the economy and to the world."**

Let us move towards a more sustainable future by acting today!

Thank you for your consideration and for this opportunity to speak.

With gratitude,



Desa Van Laarhoven
Executive Director
Marion Institute