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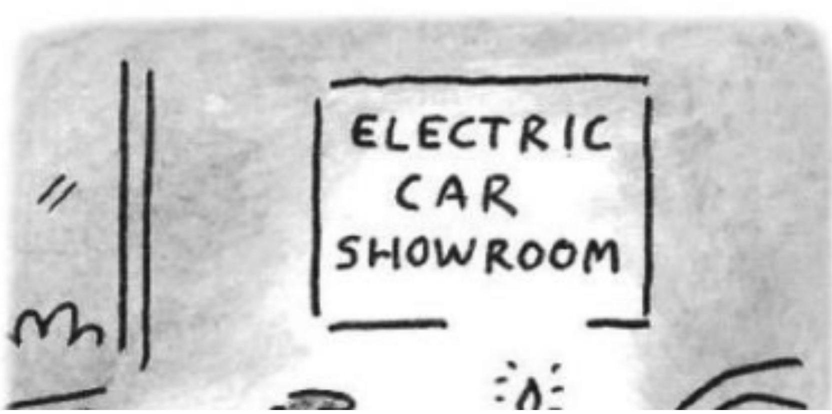
Net Zero Samizdat

30 January 2023



1) India to use emergency law to maximise coal power output
[Reuters, 30 January 2023]

2) Forget Net Zero: Oil and gas investment needed for another 30 years, BP warns
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9) Whale deaths blamed on offshore wind farms ignites feud among environmentalists

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10) Michael Shellenberger: Why environmentalists may make this whale species extinct

Michael Shellenberger, 29 January 2023

1) India to use emergency law to maximise coal power output

Reuters, 30 January 2023

NEW DELHI, Jan 30 (Reuters) - India plans to use an emergency law next month to force power plants that run on imported coal to maximise output, two government sources told Reuters on Monday, in preparation for expected record consumption this summer.

Many Indian coal-fired plants, including those those owned by Adani Power (ADAN.NS) and Tata Power (TTPW.NS) in India's western Gujarat state, have not operated at full capacity in the recent years because they have found it difficult to compete with power generated from cheap domestic coal.

Federal power ministry officials will work with those involved in debt restructuring of financially stressed power plants to make financially stressed power plants to make them functional, the sources said.

The ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

India expects its power plants to burn about 8% more coal in the financial year ending March 2024, with increased economic activity and erratic weather to continue boost growth in demand for power.

Full story

2) Forget Net Zero: Oil and gas investment needed for another 30 years, BP warns

The Daily Telegraph, 30 January 2023

Investment in oil and gas production will be needed for the next three decades if the world is to avoid more shortages and price swings, BP has warned.

The oil giant said in its annual energy outlook published on Monday that fossil fuels are still likely to account for about 20pc of primary energy in 2050 even under a significant tightening of climate policies.

Spencer Dale, chief economist at BP, said investment in new wells would therefore be needed until 2050 to ensure supply of fossil fuels matches demand.

“Natural declines in existing production sources mean there needs to be continuing upstream investment in oil and natural gas over the next 30 years,” he wrote in the report.

The assessment is likely to spark backlash from climate groups and campaigners who argue that investment should be immediately stopped in order to meet net zero goals.

Greta Thunberg told world leaders at Davos earlier this month that new extraction should be stopped immediately, while UN chief António Guterres said last June: “New funding for fossil fuels is delusional.” The International Energy Agency said in 2021 that no new oil, gas or coal projects should be approved if the world was to stay on track to meet a goal of net zero emissions by 2050.

However, BP said continued supply of oil and gas was needed to prevent a repeat of the kind of disruption seen last year when Russian oil and gas supplies were drastically cut back following the invasion of Ukraine.

Full story

3) Irwin Stelzer: John Kerry and Al Gore know their beloved Paris is no more

The Sunday Times, 29 January 2023

Davos isn't Casablanca. Humphrey Bogart's Rick could calm Ingrid Bergman's Ilsa by promising her in their 1942 film that they would always have Paris. But such words could not calm John Kerry, the man President Biden chose to cool the planet, or Al Gore, re-emerging at the Davos World Economic Forum from relative obscurity.

They might not admit it, but they know their beloved Paris is no more. Kerry knows most corporations have no idea how to fulfil the pledges made by some 200 nations in the city's 2015 agreement on climate change, and Gore believes we are creating emissions equivalent to 600,000 Hiroshima atom bombs every day. If so, that makes the Paris every day. If so, that makes the Paris temperature target further limiting global warming to 1.5C unattainable.

All save the most obtuse policymakers and businessmen know the world is not the same as it was in 2015. Back then, it was a relatively peaceful place and developed economies relatively stable. Now the world is emerging from a pandemic, it’s at war, inflation rages, and Russia has cut the flow of natural gas to western Europe, which in turn has cut purchases of Russian oil.

America and other nations’ finances are being painted too red to leave much room for green. Covid relief, the needs of Ukraine, and the unrelenting demands of the left for more social spending are consuming realistically available resources.

No policy could survive all this, and climate policy surely has not. With national budgets policy surely has not. With national budgets under strain, income transfers from richer to poorer countries to reduce global emissions get harder to justify. The billions promised by rich nations to developing ones have not materialised, and funds that have become available have passed through so many sticky fingers that little ends up in the hands of the intended recipients.

Perhaps an even more important reason not to cling to Paris-vintage policy is the realisation that climate change is only one of many costs to be considered when making policy — that reducing the total impact on what is being called “nature” should be the main focus. Electric vehicles (EVs) might avoid the cost imposed by CO_2 emissions from petrol-burning vehicles, but create even greater environmental damage by requiring the mining and processing of materials such as lithium and graphite for batteries. Filling a petrol tank just might be less harmful than charging a battery containing “dirty” ingredients and powered by generators increasingly reliant on fossil fuels.

In short, the issues that dominated Paris are now merely a sub-set of a larger, more significant problem. America’s chief executives know the difference between the world of 2015 and today. Pinched by rising interest rates, they are now focused on profit margins, and face increasing pressure to keep their noses to the grindstone rather than insert them in policy areas best left to, heaven help us, politicians.

Those elected officials know two things that, although true, were not quite so obvious only eight years ago.

The first is that there must be economic growth to generate tax receipts to pay for costly programmes, especially with a national debt already at $31.5 trillion (£25.4 trillion) and rising, and the debt ceiling a red-hot political issue. The second is that there can be no economic growth without reliance on fossil fuels for decades to come.

Doubt that? Then consider this. Sponsors here in America are experiencing considerable difficulty in getting green projects started, but little difficulty in increasing the flow of fossil fuels, despite Biden administration promises to put the oil industry out of business. Supply-chain snags, unclear tax regulations and long waits to connect to the grid (3.7 years for 8,600 projects delivered between 2011 and 2021, against 2.1 years for 5,600 projects completed a decade ago) have caused a 77.5 per cent drop in new wind installations in the third quarter of 2022 compared with a year earlier. The good news is that there are investors eager to dip into the new $369 billion honeypot of tax credits; the bad news is that their projects are stalled. Besides, those projects threaten the stability of the electric grid.

Meanwhile, US natural gas production is at a record high, crude oil production at its highest level with the exception of 2019, and 90 per cent of the 600 massive offshore drilling rigs available worldwide last year were working or under contract, compared with 63 per cent five years earlier. Germany is turning to the dirtiest variety of coal, India has announced it will continue to build coal- fired generating plants rather than sacrifice growth, and China has 95 such plants under construction. Britain has reactivated its natural gas storage facility.

None of this is reason for despair. Adaptation proceeds apace. Meanwhile, investment in low-carbon energy technology rose to $1.1 trillion in 2022 — on a par with investment in fossil fuel supply. Growth, if not stifled by misbegotten fiscal and monetary policies, will provide innovators with cash and opportunities, and it takes only one to make a difference — think Elon Musk.

4) Chinese carmakers line up for dominance of the UK car market

The Daily Telegraph, 28 January 2023

As traditional brands step back, up to 30 new electric ones eye the British market - most of them Chinese.

Few cars manage to attain the name recognition of the Fiesta, Ford’s cheap, reliable runabout in which millions of Britons learned to drive.

But after sales of 4.8 million in the UK alone, the American car maker has called time on the model. Production is to end this year after almost 50 years after its debut.

The withdrawal creates a gap at the bottom of the market as more and more car makers ditch cheaper models in favour of pricer – and more profitable – SUVs. Yet nature abhors a vacuum and there are already new manufacturers lining up to take the place of the old guard. The vast majority are from the same country: China.

Up to 30 new electric vehicle brands are eyeing up the UK car market, according to an industry report seen by The Telegraph, with most of them Chinese.

Challengers have designs on the cheaper end of the market, preparing to sell mass market battery-powered cars to Britain.

Companies like BYD and Ora, which already have agreements in place with UK dealers, will be joined by a raft of other car makers including Chery, Dongfeng and Haval. They are big brands in China but virtually unknown to British buyers.

“My read of the Chinese is they are very, very excited about the UK market,” says Mark Raban, the boss of Lookers, one of the top UK car dealers.

Lookers will soon begin selling cars from BYD, which is backed by billionaire US investor Warren Buffett. The company only started making cars in 2003 but already has a

17pc market share of electric vehicle sales in China.

As well as the cars themselves, BYD also manufactures the batteries that go in them. This will be of growing importance as rising demand for batteries across the world puts pressure on supply.

“I think we're going to see some very, very competitive pricing,” says Raban.

China’s car market is the biggest in the world but sales growth is slowing, in-line with the broader economy. As a result, domestic automakers are now looking to export.

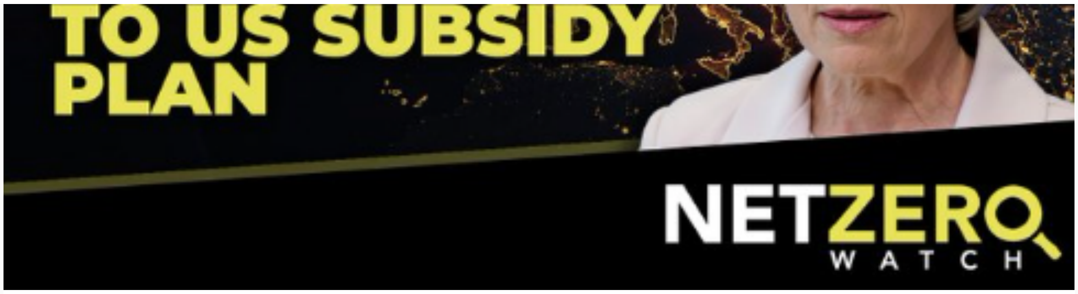
Britain is an obvious target: the UK recently reclaimed its place as the second-biggest European market, behind Germany, and the Chinese car industry already has well established links here.

MG, for instance, is now one of the fastest-growing car brands in the UK, passing Citroen, Honda, Renault and Skoda. While a British marque, MG has been Chinese owned since 2005.

As The Telegraph revealed last month, MG plans to expand electric car sales further in the UK, seeing “a significant opportunity” in the country.

Full story

5) Seven EU countries oppose new EU funding as response to U.S. subsidy plan
Reuters, 27 January 2023



BRUSSELS, Jan 27 (Reuters) - Plans by the European Commission to create new European Union funding for the green industry are facing mounting opposition in the 27-nation bloc, as seven EU countries openly rejected the idea in a letter to the EU executive.

The letter, seen by Reuters and dated Jan. 26, was signed by the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Austria, Ireland, Estonia and Slovakia and addressed to the European Commission vice president responsible for trade, Valdis Dombrovskis.

Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium, while not signatories to the letter, also oppose any new joint EU borrowing, further expanding the list of countries likely to vote against such plans when EU leaders meet to discuss them on Feb. 9-10.

All 10 countries say the EU should be using funds already approved instead of seeking more money.

The Commission, responsible for fair competition in the 27-nation EU, believes new funds are needed to even out the abilities of poorer and richer countries to help their green industries against competition from China and the United States.

EU officials are especially worried that the U.S. Inflation Reduction Act, which offers $369 billion in subsidies to firms producing electric vehicles, batteries, wind turbines or hydrogen in the U.S., will lure away EU firms.

The fight to keep Europe attractive for the

The fight to keep Europe attractive for the green industry is made even more difficult by energy prices, which are much higher in the EU than in the U.S., and by the often long EU permitting processes for green investment.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said last week the EU would prepare a law to make life easier for its green industry and back it up with state aid and a European Sovereignty Fund, as well as a more immediate funding "bridging solution", to keep businesses from moving to the United States.

But in their letter, the seven countries said the EU should first spend the money it had already agreed to raise through the 800 billion euro post-pandemic recovery and resilience fund (RRF) of grants and cheap loans.

"We have to ensure that the economy can better absorb the already agreed EU funding," better absorb the already agreed EU funding," the seven countries wrote. "So far, only around 100 billion euros of the total of 390 billion euros of the RRF grants have been used."

"Further, there is still an unused loan capacity available in the RRF. Any additional measures should be based on a thorough analysis by the Commission of the remaining financing gap, and no new funding should be introduced," they said.

Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium share that view, pointing to unused loans from the recovery fund that governments have not claimed because they preferred grants.

The letter said that instead of looking for new money, the EU should cut red tape for investments and make progress on its Capital Markets Union, a project that has been dragging on since 2014.

dragging on since 2014.

6) Britain's green economy in a nutshell: Wind farms could be paid more to switch off than to generate power

[The Sunday Telegraph, 29 January 2023]

Wind farms backed by government subsidies could be paid more to switch off than to generate power, The Telegraph has learnt.

A lack of grid storage and transmission

A lack of grid storage and transmission infrastructure means that the UK is regularly producing more electricity from wind than it can use.

At particularly windy times, the National Grid pays producers to switch off rather than overload the local system, with the costs passed on to household energy bills.

Producers offer the price at which they are willing to switch off, which is normally around the market rate for electricity, currently at record highs because of the energy crisis.

Wind producers on newer government subsidy contracts are paid a fixed price, generally below current market rates, to generate electricity.

By switching off, producers may therefore be able to make rates well above their fixed prices.

prices.

Although the loophole only applies to about seven per cent of wind farmer producers on so-called “contracts for difference” (CfD) – the newer subsidy system – the issue could grow as new wind farms come online.

Developers of the newest wind farms have offered to produce power for a guaranteed price of as little as £37 per megawatt-hour (MWh).

That compares to wholesale electricity prices currently around £150/MWh, which are expected to stay at record-high levels for years to come.

Meanwhile, the National Grid forecast that levels of curtailment will grow fourfold in the next decade, from 3.8 terawatt-hours (TWh) in 2022 to 15TWh in 2030, with costs forecast to reach £2.5 billion a year

In 2022, consumers paid £215 million to turn wind farms off, and £717 million to buy gas-powered electricity to make up the difference, according to figures from the UK Wind Curtailment Monitor.

The Telegraph revealed this week that wind farms could be paid to switch off even at times when the National Grid is paying households to turn off their gadgets because of blackout fears.

Simon Cran-McGreehin, the head of analysis at the Energy & Climate Intelligence Unit, said that CfD wind farms were saving households money overall.

He said: “Gas power stations receive the lion’s share of constraint payments and have been driving up the electricity price because of the surges in the international gas price and the way the power market is currently structured.

“Through contracts for difference, the big new offshore wind farms have been effectively subsidising bills roughly to the tune of the constraint payments going to wind.

“For bill payers, it’s regrettable that the UK hasn’t encouraged greater investment in its power grids and that we’re having to turn away cheap wind power at the very time we need it to reduce our reliance on gas.”

However, Craig MacKinlay, a Tory MP and chairman of the Net Zero Scrutiny Group, said: “The fact that hundreds of millions of pounds are being paid annually to wind farms not to generate, with these costs added to consumer bills, is a national scandal.”

Mr MacKinlay said the issue highlighted that “the intermittency of renewables with gas having to be used as the reliable balancer means wind companies are reaping the cream but doing nothing to help energy security”.

He added: “BEIS [Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy] lawyers who drafted these appalling contracts are responsible for billions of pounds of additional costs to consumers.

“The complexity of the energy system and its pricing is a direct result of distorting a functioning market on the altar of net zero.”

Full story

7) Green Britain: Major power company warns Brits to expect six hours of power

cuts if nation needs to ration energy

The Sun, 29 January 2023

News > Politics

CUT IT OUT Major power company warns Brits to expect six hours of power cuts if nation needs to ration energy

A MAJOR power company has warned Brits to expect six hours of power cuts if the nation needs to ration energy.

UK Power Networks, which covers millions of homes in London and the South East, issued homes in London and the South East, issued advice admitting the energy situation is “challenging.”

The company, which manages electricity cables and lines, has warned families to get a torch, keep mobile phones fully charged and ensure they have plenty of warm clothes during the winter.

An email sent out yesterday also urged them to make sure they had food which did not need to be heated.

But it does say that an energy shortage this winter remains unlikely.

The email, sent to vulnerable customers, said: “While this winter is expected to be challenging, there is no guarantee emergency measures will be necessary.”

It adds: “Power cuts might be uncommon, but they can happen all-year-round so it’s important you are prepared and know what to do.”

It warns if they do occur power will be lost for at least three hours at a time, once or twice a day.

The advice email continues: “Keep a mobile phone fully charged (if you have one) so you can use it to go online for updates or call if you have a power cut.”

Full story

8) Simon Cooke: 'Smart Cities' are just municipal authoritarianism
The View from Culllingworth, 28 January 2023

From the 15-minute city to the ever

extending use of surveillance to control out lives, city governments' green agenda is creating a new authoritarianism

I live in a West Yorkshire village, a place the Americans would call an ‘exurb’, filled with people who commute to a variety of locations for work, leisure and the everyday tasks of an ordinary life. At the junction of Keighley Road and Bingley Road just as you leave the village northwards if you look carefully you’ll see, high up on a lamppost at that corner, a little black camera. It’s an ANPR - 'automatic number plate recognition’ - camera. I’m not remotely paranoid but you do have to ask why our government wants such a camera in such a safe, rural place. And the answer, I suppose, lies in the enthusiasm of municipal leaderships for what they call the ‘smart city’.

Back in October I wrote a short piece for

the Daily Telegraph about Oxford County Council's plans for 'traffic filters' in Oxford itself. In the weeks since that article was published there have been a collection of ever more spectacular claims about the proposals. At the heart of these claims, often from the join-the-dots world of Covid and climate scepticism, is the belief that the 'traffic filters' are part of wider plans to confine us all to our homes so as to save the planet from the terrors of climate change.

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"In Oxford, and in a similar scheme in Canterbury, councils will require residents to have a permit to work elsewhere in the city and will limit the number of times they can drive across the boundary of their allocated 15-minute zone. If you don't comply, the city's automatic number-plate recognition systems will allow the council to levy a £70 fine."

As a result the leader of Oxford County Council stood hesitatingly in front of a camera and denied any plans for 'climate lockdown' and accused unnamed people "...including the national press" of promoting scare stories that resulted in lots of people contacting the council worried that, as I put it in my piece "...you'll need a permit to visit your mum a few streets away and can only do this twice a week."

Various versions of Carlos Moreno's '15 Minute City' have been drawn up all based on the original Parisian scheme. A scheme that Moreno explicitly linked to climate change and 'net zero' and then asserted how the Covid pandemic made introducing his ideas possible - "Were it not for Covid-19, I think that the conditions for deploying the 15-minute city concept would have been very hard to instigate…but the catastrophe of the pandemic has seen us drastically change how we live – it has forced us to reassess the nature and quality of our urban lifestyles.”

Full post

9) Whale deaths blamed on offshore wind farms ignites feud among environmentalists
The Washington Times, 28 January 2023

A spate of whales washing up along East Coast beaches has exposed a deep rift in the environmental movement between conservationists seeking to stop the construction of massive offshore wind farms and advocates who say renewable energy projects will save the planet from climate change.

A group of environmentalists is calling on New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy to halt work on ocean wind projects after a sudden increase in whale strandings on the region's seashores.

In a little more than a month, seven dead whales, most of them humpbacks, have washed up on New Jersey and New York beaches. That is a record in a region that typically has a similar number of beached whales in an entire year.

Some environmentalists say underwater surveys that involve blasting air guns into the ocean floor and other preparatory work for the installation of wind turbines could be disturbing whale migration and feeding patterns and causing the massive mammals to get injured or stranded on shore.

Mr. Murphy, a Democrat pushing an aggressive renewable energy plan for the state that hinges on building several large offshore wind sites, rejected calls to halt the ocean projects in response to the whale deaths.

Some of the nation’s top environmental groups, including the National Resources Defense Council and the Sierra Club, support his position.

Although those groups have long worked to protect wildlife, particularly endangered species, they are now prioritizing renewable energy production, especially offshore wind farms. They say renewable energy is necessary to end dependence on fossil fuels and stop climate change, which they believe is harming life on the planet, including whales.

“They have put their thumb on the scale in favor of doing renewable energy for the purposes of fighting climate change, and have either been unwilling or unable to come out and raise concern about this,” said Lisa Linowes, a coalition member of Save Right Whales.

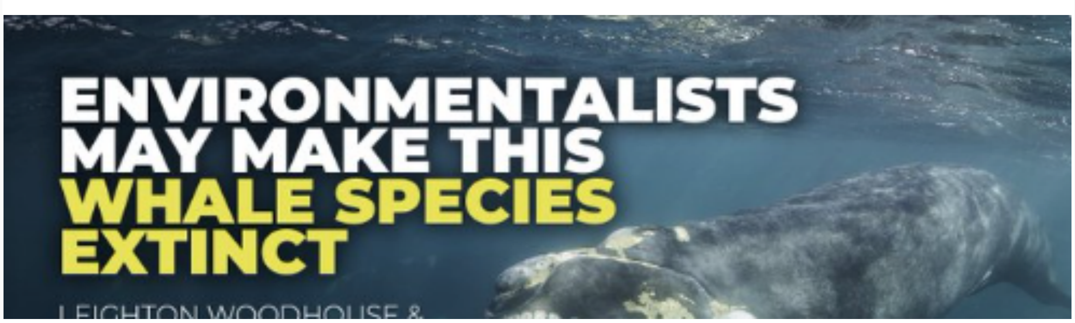
Many of the green energy groups that are backing offshore wind farms get their funding from foundations dedicated to eliminating fossil fuels.

The Sierra Club has received some of its funding from Bloomberg Philanthropies, which supports "a 100% clean energy economy."

The Sierra Club, the Natural Resources Defense Council and other environmental groups sit alongside offshore wind companies on the steering committee of the New York Offshore Wind Alliance, which seeks to develop enough offshore wind to help the state achieve its mandate of a 100% emissions-free grid by 2040.

[Full story]

10) Michael Shellenberger: Why environmentalists may make this whale species extinct
[Michael Shellenberger, 29 January 2023]



How is it that nearly every major conservation and environmental organization is actively championing industrial energy projects that could lead to the extinction of a whale species?

Since the passage of the 1973 Endangered Species Act, environmentalists have fought for strict protections for endangered species. They have demanded that the government apply what is known as the "precautionary principle," which states that if there is any risk that a human activity will make a species extinct, it should be illegal.

And yet here we are, on the 50th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act, watching the whole of the environmental movement — from the Audubon Society and the National Wildlife Federation to scientific groups like the Woods Hole Institute, New England Aquarium, and Mystic Aquarium — betray the precautionary principle by risking the extinction of the North principle by risking the extinction of the North Atlantic right whale.

The cause of this environmental betrayal is massive industrial wind energy projects off the East Coast of the U.S. The wind turbine blades are the length of a football field. Sitting atop giant poles they will reach three times higher than the Statue of Liberty. The towers will be directly inside critical ocean habitat for the North Atlantic right whale.

There are **only 340** of the whales left, down from 348 just one year earlier. So many North Atlantic right whales are killed by man-made factors that there have been no documented cases of any of them dying of natural causes in decades. Their average life expectancy has declined from a century to **45 years**. A single additional unnatural and unnecessary death could risk the loss of the entire species.

Surveying for, building, and operating industrial wind projects could harm or kill whales, **according to the U.S. government's own science**.

The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

Administration (NOAA) has given the wind industry **11 "incidental harassment authorizations**," or permits to harass hundreds of whales, including 169 critically endangered right whales.

The industry will bring more ships into the areas that could strike and kill whales. Submarine noise pollution from the wind farm's construction and operation, and entanglements in equipment, also add to the risk. So too could air turbulence generated by the turbines harm or destroy zooplakton feeding grounds.

And, now, wind developers are demanding higher speed limits for their boats. If they don't get them, the industry claims, **it will need to build hotels for the workers at the sites**, right in the middle of right whale habitat.

Full post

Terence Mordaunt
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