

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES PROGRAM: ONGOING STUDIES

BOEMRE OCS Region: National

Title: OCS Renewable Energy and Space-Use Conflicts and Related Mitigation

Total Cost: \$824,872

Period of Performance: FY 2009-2011

Conducting Organization: Industrial Economics, Inc. (IEC)

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Description:

Background The ocean accommodates a variety of uses that are separated by time of day, season, location, and/or zones set aside for specific users. Alternative energy development offers the potential for new use space conflicts with other existing uses of the OCS. Management of ocean space and resources have been addressed by a number of state, regional, and federal organizations – fisheries management councils, state task forces, and coastal zone management agencies, for example, but information on the various uses of these spaces and the potential conflicts as they pertain to alternative energy development are not well documented nor are they understood in terms of type of activity, duration, and timing.

Space use conflicts was identified as a social, economic, and cultural concern in the synthesis of existing information on the environmental effects of alternative energy development on the OCS. Avoidance and mitigation measures have not been fully developed for space use conflicts of alternative energy development, but need to be.

Objectives The purpose of the study is to identify space use conflicts on the OCS between alternative energy development and existing and potential other uses of the OCS and ways to mitigate those conflicts.

Methods The study will develop a geospatial database that is compatible with the BOEMRE mapping system to assist in determining multiple uses offshore. Through a literature search and key informant discussions, including lessons learned from the European experience, the study will develop a comprehensive list of detailed mitigation measures that can be applied to avoid adverse impacts between alternative energy and other uses that may be present in OCS and identify, develop, and evaluate specific proposals to mitigate or resolve potential spatial conflicts between these multiple uses. In addition, the study will explore the possibilities for creating or revising institutional linkages that might facilitate communication and cooperation between the various entities involved and establish a collaborative of key individuals that will develop techniques of co-existence.

Importance to BOEMRE Siting issues are extremely important in determining areas of possible alternative energy development. BOEMRE decisions on lease sales must consider potential space-use conflicts on the OCS and consider how these conflicts differ during construction and operations. BOEMRE needs to identify potential space use conflicts of OCS alternative energy development with other activities (e.g., fishing, navigation, sand and gravel extraction etc.), develop criteria for evaluating those conflicts, and identify mechanisms to mitigate existing conflicts and avoid future ones. This study will engage other Federal and state agencies to promote institutional and cross cutting thinking about

multiple uses. Information from the study will be used in BOEMRE decision making on siting and monitoring alternative energy development.

Current Status: Data collection and draft product development.

Final Report Due: January, 2012

Publications: None.

Affiliated WWW sites: None.

Revised date: April 19, 2011