

Massachusetts Outer Continental Shelf Planning for Commercial Wind Leasing

Call for Information and Nominations and Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Assessment

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
Public Information Meetings

February 2012



Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

- Department of the Interior's Ocean Energy Agency
- Manage the nation's natural gas, oil and other mineral and energy resources on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS)



Call for Information and Nominations (Call) and Notice of Intent (NOI)

- Published the Call and NOI to prepare an environmental assessment (EA) for tracts within the Massachusetts Call area on February 6, 2012
- 45-day comment period closes on March 22, 2012
- Submit comments by email or regular mail (addresses given at end of presentation)

What is a Call?

- The Call is a request for information for BOEM to consider in the planning, analysis, and decision-making process for offshore wind development
- It is *not* a decision to lease
- It is an early step in the first of four stages in the process of authorizing offshore commercial wind development

Stage 1: Planning and Analysis

- Engage stakeholders and public
- Intergovernmental Task Force with affected federal, state, local, and tribal government officials (consult)
- **Publish Call and NOI**
- Consider information received and announce Area Identification (Wind Energy Area)
- Conduct environmental compliance review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Complete consultations required by other laws (e.g., Endangered Species Act)

Stage 2: Leasing

- Offshore wind leases may be issued through a competitive or noncompetitive process
- The process to be used for the Call area will depend on the number and location of qualified nominations received in response to the Call

Stage 2: Leasing

- Continue to engage stakeholders and consult through the task force
- Publish leasing notices
 - Determination of No Competitive Interest (Noncompetitive)
 - Proposed and Final Sale Notices (Competitive)
- Issue Lease(s)
 - Negotiate lease (Noncompetitive)
 - Hold lease sale (Competitive)

Stage 2: Leasing

- Any lease that is issued will convey to the lessee only the right to prepare and submit plans required to proceed to the next stages—site assessment and commercial development
- The lessee must receive BOEM's approval of each plan before conducting site assessment or construction and operations

Stage 3: Site Assessment & Characterization

- The lessee will conduct surveys (e.g., geological & geophysical, biological) on the leasehold (**site characterization**)
- If the lessee intends to install a bottom-founded data collection facility (e.g., meteorological mast or buoy), it must submit a Site Assessment Plan (SAP) for review and approval by BOEM (**site assessment**)
- BOEM conducts environmental and technical reviews of the lessee's SAP

Stage 3: Site Assessment & Characterization

- The lessee has a site assessment term of up to 5 years to decide whether to proceed to the next stage—commercial development
- If the lessee decides to proceed to commercial development, it must submit a Construction and Operations Plan (COP) to BOEM for review and approval

Stage 4: Commercial Development

- The lessee's COP describes:
 - Overall site investigation results
 - Offshore and onshore support
 - Any proposed mitigation and monitoring and lease stipulation compliance
 - Design, fabrication, installation, and operations concepts
 - Decommissioning and site clearance concepts
- BOEM prepares an environmental impact statement (EIS) and conducts other necessary environmental and technical reviews and consultations

Stage 4: Commercial Development

- Lessee must prepare a Navigational Risk Assessment
- If BOEM approves the COP, the lessee will have a 25-year term in which to construct facilities and generate electricity
- After 25 years, lease expiration occurs and decommissioning is required unless a renewal is granted

Opportunity for Public Comment

- All four stages provide for stakeholder engagement and public comment
 - Stakeholder meetings
 - Intergovernmental task force meetings:
public Q&A sessions
 - NOI to prepare an EA or EIS
 - Scoping meetings for EISs
 - Hearings and comment periods for draft EISs

Massachusetts Request for Interest

- Request for Interest (RFI) was published in December 2010 for an area about twice the size of the Call Area
- At February 2011 stakeholders meetings, commercial fishing interests and others communicated that non-government entities had not been engaged early on the RFI
- MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs established two bodies to facilitate non-governmental consultation:
 - Fisheries Working Group
 - Habitat Working Group

Massachusetts Request for Interest

- BOEM met with these working groups and extended RFI comment period
- In May 2011, BOEM excluded the eastern half of the RFI area from further consideration on recommendations of commercial fishing interests and others
- Received 247 comments and 11 expressions of industry interest

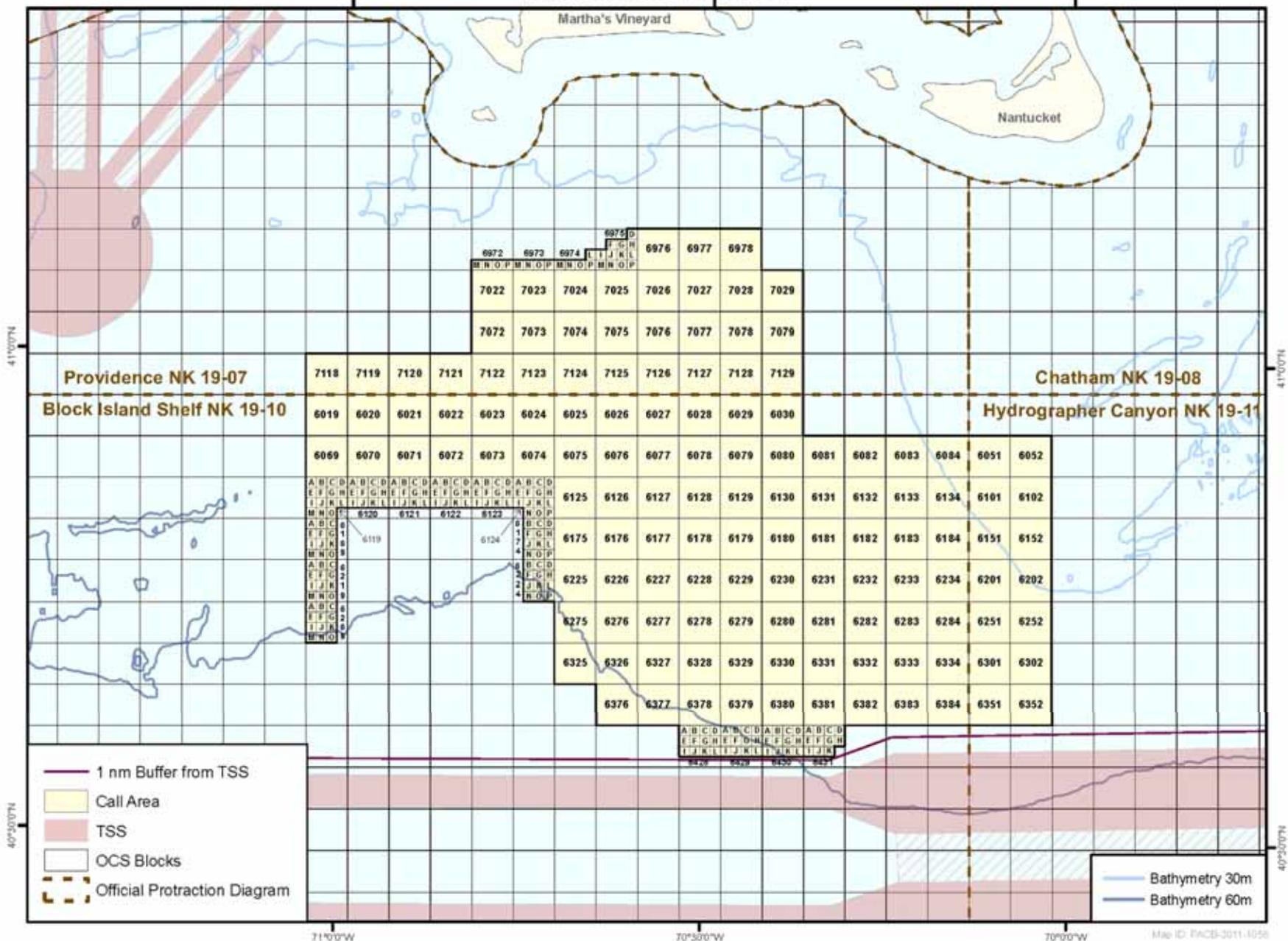
Massachusetts Call

- February 6 Call is the second planning notice issued for an area off Massachusetts
- BOEM developed the Call area in consultation with the Massachusetts Intergovernmental Task Force
- Solicits further comment on the area remaining for consideration

Massachusetts Call

- Seeks industry nominations and provides companies that previously expressed interest an opportunity to revisit nominations
- BOEM will complete Area Identification (establishment of a Wind Energy Area) after considering information received in response to the Call and NOI and consulting further with the task force

Massachusetts Call Area



NOI

- The Wind Energy Area will form the basis for the proposed action to be analyzed in BOEM's EA
- BOEM will formulate and analyze reasonable alternatives to the proposed action (e.g., mitigations, areal exclusions) in the EA
- BOEM also will complete consultations required by other laws

Preparation of the EA

- Completed one EA addressing the issuance of commercial offshore wind leases in the Mid-Atlantic
- That EA analyzed the environmental impacts of lease issuance, site assessment, and site characterization activities for WEAs off New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia and resulted in a finding of no significant impact (FONSI)
- BOEM will take a similar approach in preparing the EA for the Massachusetts WEA

EA Scenario

- BOEM will develop a scenario consisting of routine and non-routine activities expected as a result of commercial wind lease issuance in the area
- Routine activities will include:
 - Site characterization surveys (shallow hazards, geological & geophysical, geotechnical, archaeological, biological)
 - Site assessment activities (installation of met masts and buoys)
- Non-routine activities will include:
 - Severe storms
 - Vessel collisions and allisions
 - Spills of oil or other pollutants

Analysis of Socioeconomic Conditions

- Commercial and recreational fishing activities
- Cultural resources
- Recreational resources
- Demographics and employment
- Environmental justice
- Land use and coastal infrastructure
- Other uses of the area

Analysis of Physical and Biological Resources

- Physical Resources
 - Air quality
 - Water quality
- Biological Resources
 - Fish and essential fish habitat (EFH)
 - Marine mammals
 - Birds and bats
 - Sea turtles
 - Benthic resources
 - Coastal habitats

Examples of Alternatives that May Be Analyzed

- Geographic Alternatives
- Fishing Conflicts Alternatives
- Timing/Seasonal Alternatives
- Ship/Vessel Conflicts Alternatives
- No Action Alternative

Analysis of Cumulative Impacts

- Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions:
 - Onshore development
 - Existing port and waterway usage
 - Maritime traffic
 - Other renewable energy activities (e.g., in the Rhode Island area to the west)

Consultations

- National Historic Preservation Act
- Government to Government Consultations
- Endangered Species Act
- Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (EFH)
- Marine Mammal Protection Act
- Coastal Zone Management Act

EA Findings

- If the EA finds that lease issuance and site characterization and assessment activities will have significant impacts, BOEM will undertake preparation of an EIS
- If the EA results in a FONSI, BOEM may issue commercial wind leases and approve SAPs based on that finding

Submitting Comments in Response to the Call and NOI

- The Call solicits nominations from potential lessees, as well as information from any interested or affected party who wishes to provide information on issues and resources including:
 - Geological and geophysical conditions
 - Archaeological and cultural resource sites
 - Historic properties
 - Other uses of the area
 - Other relevant socioeconomic, biological, and environmental information

Submitting Comments in Response to the Call and NOI

- The NOI requests interested and affected parties to identify:
 - Issues and alternatives to be considered in the EA
 - Potential mitigation measures
 - Sources of information relevant to the analysis

Comments Due March 22

- The Call and NOI are available online at:
www.boem.gov/offshore/RenewableEnergy/StateActivities-Massachusetts.htm
- You may submit comments to www.regulations.gov. In the entry entitled “Enter Keyword or ID,” enter BOEM 2011-0097. Then click “search” and follow further instructions
- You may send comments by regular mail or hand delivered to:
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Office of Renewable Energy Programs
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