

THE NEWS ROOM

FOR RELEASE:  
January 19, 2011

THE BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY  
MANAGEMENT,  
REGULATION AND ENFORCEMENT

Office of Public Affairs

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## **BOEMRE and North Carolina Form Offshore Renewable Energy Task Force**

**WILMINGTON, NC** – The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE) today held its first offshore renewable energy task force meeting in cooperation with North Carolina’s Department of Commerce. This intergovernmental task force was established to facilitate communication between BOEMRE and state, local, tribal and federal stakeholders concerning commercial renewable energy leasing and development on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) off the coast of North Carolina. The task force includes state government officials designated by Governor Bev Perdue, officials from affected federal agencies, elected local government officials, and tribal leaders.

“BOEMRE created this task force to facilitate the effective and efficient review of proposed renewable energy projects on the OCS offshore North Carolina,” said BOEMRE Director Michael R. Bromwich. “We will work together with the state to enable North Carolina to develop renewable energy off its coast, thereby expanding our nation’s energy resource portfolio.”

“North Carolina appreciates the cooperation of the Bureau and this opportunity for this good start in developing the policies and procedures to expand the state’s renewable energy resources in ways that are compatible with the lives and livelihoods of those who make the coast their home and depend upon it for their livelihood,” said Jennifer Bumgarner, North Carolina Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Energy.

Interior Department Deputy Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management Ned Farquhar delivered opening remarks at today’s task force meeting. The meeting featured a discussion about the commercial leasing process for OCS renewable energy and a presentation of the draft task force charter. The task force members discussed options for starting the leasing process and the procedure for specific actions required by BOEMRE and the state for developing offshore renewable energy.

In April 2009, President Barack Obama and Interior Secretary Ken Salazar announced the final framework for renewable energy development on the OCS. This framework establishes the process BOEMRE uses for granting leases, easements, and rights-of-way for offshore renewable energy development activities, such as the siting and construction of wind generation facilities on the OCS. The framework also allows BOEMRE to use task forces in carrying out its responsibilities for authorizing OCS renewable energy activities in partnership with state, local, and tribal governments, and federal agencies. As part of the “Smart from the Start” wind initiative announced by Secretary Salazar in the fall of 2010 to facilitate offshore wind development, this task force will help identify priority areas on the OCS that have generally bountiful wind energy and relatively fewer potential environmental and use conflicts than other areas offshore North Carolina. BOEMRE will use that information to identify wind energy areas along the OCS that may be particularly suitable for potential offshore wind development.

Task forces have previously been established with Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Virginia, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, North Carolina and New York, and are in process for South Carolina and Florida.

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