

THE NEWS ROOM

FOR RELEASE:
February 08, 2011

THE BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY
MANAGEMENT,
REGULATION AND ENFORCEMENT

Office of Public Affairs

BOEMRE to Prepare Environmental Assessment for Commercial Wind Activities on the Atlantic OCS

WASHINGTON – The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE) today announced that it is seeking comment as it prepares an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze the impacts of leasing and associated site characterization surveys and site assessment activities in prospective areas identified for priority commercial wind development off several states along the mid-Atlantic coast. As part of this process, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analyses will be initiated for designated Wind Energy Areas off the coasts of Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey and Virginia.

This assessment is part of the Interior Secretary Ken Salazar's "Smart from the Start" renewable energy initiative that will facilitate efficient and environmentally responsible leasing of designated Wind Energy Areas on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf that are most suitable for potential development.

"We will continue to ensure that all voices are heard in this process – through comments received on the Federal Register notice, as well as through formal biological resource consultations and government to government consultations with tribal governments," said BOEMRE Director Michael R. Bromwich. "Analyzing the potential environmental impacts in the designated Wind Energy Areas will ensure that projects are developed the right way and in the right places."

BOEMRE is seeking comments from federal, state and local government agencies, tribal governments and other interested parties in determining the significant issues and alternatives to be analyzed in the EA. The notice is available for public inspection today through the Federal Register's website at: <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/public-inspection/index.html>.

The Wind Energy Areas, announced by Secretary Salazar yesterday, were identified by BOEMRE in consultation with other federal agencies and state renewable energy task forces. BOEMRE is proposing to begin the commercial lease issuance process and subsequent approval process of site assessment activities in the following areas:

- **Delaware:** The area offshore Delaware is made up of 10 whole OCS blocks and 17 partial blocks. It rests between the incoming and outgoing shipping routes for Delaware Bay. The western edge is approximately 11 nautical miles east of Dewey Beach and the eastern edge is approximately 23 nautical miles from Dewey Beach. The entire area is approximately 122 square nautical miles.
- **Maryland:** The area offshore Maryland is made up of 29 whole OCS blocks and 4 partial blocks. The western edge is approximately 10 nautical miles from the Ocean City, Maryland coast, and the eastern edge is approximately 27 nautical miles from the Ocean City, Maryland coast. The entire area is approximately 207 square nautical miles.
- **New Jersey:** The area offshore New Jersey contains approximately 43 whole OCS blocks and 34 partial blocks. The boundary begins 7 nautical miles from the shore and extends roughly 23 nautical miles seaward. It extends from southwest to northeast approximately 45 nautical miles between Avalon and Barnegat Light. The entire area is approximately 418 square nautical miles.

- **Virginia:** The area offshore Virginia is made up of 22 OCS lease blocks and 5 partial blocks. The western edge of the area is approximately 20 nautical miles from Virginia Beach, and the eastern edge is approximately 37 nautical miles from Virginia Beach. The entire area is approximately 165 square nautical miles.

For more information on yesterday's Wind Energy Areas announcement and a map of these areas, go to: <http://www.doi.gov/news/pressreleases/Salazar-Chu-Announce-Major-Offshore-Wind-Initiatives.cfm>.

The Notice of Intent initiates scoping for Wind Energy Areas off the coast of Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey and Virginia. It may become appropriate to analyze one or more Wind Energy Areas in separate EAs.

If leases are issued in any of these areas, there will be subsequent, thorough Environmental NEPA analyses of any project proposed for construction and operation. All interested parties are invited to submit comments on the scope of the EA, significant issues that should be addressed and alternatives that should be considered. Comments should be sent in one of the following ways:

- **Electronically:** <http://www.regulations.gov>. In the entry titled "Enter Keyword or ID," enter BOEM-2010-0077, then click search. Follow the instructions to submit public comments and view supporting and related materials available for this document.
- In written form, addressed to: "Comments on Mid-Atlantic Regional EA" to Program Manager, Office of Offshore Alternative Energy Programs (MS 4090), Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement, 381 Elden Street, Herndon, Virginia 20170.

Comments will be accepted from the date of publication in the Federal Register on February 9, 2011, through March 11, 2011.

In 2010, BOEMRE began publishing Requests for Interest related to the designated Wind Energy Areas. Those notices will provide further opportunity to provide comment informing both the NEPA and commercial wind leasing processes. As the result of comments received on these notices and the analysis in the EA, the Wind Energy Areas offshore Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey and Virginia may be further refined or modified. In addition, it may become appropriate to analyze one or more Wind Energy Areas in separate EAs.

Contact: [BOEMRE Public Affairs](#)