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BOEMRE and Coast Guard Sign Agreement Outlining Roles for Offshore Renewable Energy Installations

WASHINGTON – The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE) and the U.S. Coast Guard (Coast Guard) today signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to identify and clarify their respective roles and responsibilities with respect to offshore renewable energy installations (OREIs) on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS).

The MOA reaffirms the commitment of the two agencies to responsible oversight of renewable energy development. It will aid BOEMRE and the Coast Guard in carrying out their missions and responsibilities by enhancing communication and cooperation between the two agencies.

“BOEMRE has enjoyed an outstanding relationship with the Coast Guard in overseeing and regulating offshore oil and gas activities and facilities,” said BOEMRE Director Michael R. Bromwich. “This MOA extends that cooperation and collaboration to the oversight of the developing offshore renewable energy industry and will greatly enhance the efficiency of our environmental review and leasing processes.”

“The Coast Guard looks forward to continuing its collaborative relationship with BOEMRE in the development of offshore energy projects,” said Coast Guard Vice Admiral Brian M. Salerno, deputy commandant for operations. “As proposals for offshore energy projects are received, the Coast Guard will serve as a cooperating agency to BOEMRE and provide subject matter expertise on issues that may affect navigational safety, security and the marine environment.”

The Energy Policy Act of 2005 authorizes BOEMRE to grant leases, easements, and rights-of-way for OREIs in consultation with the Coast Guard and other federal agencies. As the lead federal agency, BOEMRE is responsible for conducting relevant analyses under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for leasing areas on the OCS for renewable energy development and will develop the appropriate NEPA documentation for specific project proposals. Under the MOA, BOEMRE will invite the Coast Guard to serve as a cooperating agency under NEPA in the review of all leases, grants, and associated plans related to OREIs and will use the Coast Guard’s expertise on maritime safety, security, mobility and national defense to inform its analysis. The two agencies will use this MOA to guide their respective agency activities through all phases of the OCS renewable energy program from initial planning and leasing to plan approval and management of operations to lease termination and decommissioning.

BOEMRE will also invite the Coast Guard to participate in all BOEMRE intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Forces and to provide their expertise at each step of the leasing process.

More information on implementation actions for each agency under the MOA can be found at: http://www.boemre.gov/pdfs/MOA_USCG_BOEMRE_July_27_2011.pdf.

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