Meeting Summary

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

Gulf of Mexico Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force Meeting

Tuesday, June 15, 2021

9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. CT

I. Introduction

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) convened a Gulf of Mexico Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force Meeting on June 15, 2021. The meeting was held remotely via webinar using the Webex platform. Participants included representatives from federal and state agencies, tribal nations, and local government. Participating members of the public included representatives from industry, academic and research institutions, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Approximately 444 participants attended the meeting.

The meeting's objectives were to:

- Facilitate coordination and consultation among federal, state, local, and tribal governments regarding offshore wind energy and the renewable energy leasing process on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) in the Gulf of Mexico.
- Establish a common understanding of the role and future activities of the Gulf of Mexico Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force.
- Update the Task Force and stakeholders on recent state activities.
- Provide opportunities for public input on the topics being considered by the Task Force.

Recordings of the meeting proceedings along with each individual meeting presentation are available at the following link: https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/gulf-mexico-intergovernmental-renewable-energy-task-force-meeting.

The meeting agenda is available in Appendix A. The list of Task Force member participants is available in Appendix B.

This meeting summary document summarizes key outcomes and next steps from the meeting. It focuses on discussions and Task Force member input received rather than the formal presentations made. It is not intended to be a detailed transcript. The meeting was facilitated by Kearns & West (K&W).

This meeting summary is organized into the following sections:

I. Introduction
II. Discussion Highlights
  A. Welcome and Opening Remarks
  B. Task Force Member Introductions & Agenda Review
  C. Background Information & Task Force Orientation
  D. Updates –Overview of State Renewable Energy Goals
  E. Panel–Offshore Wind Jurisdictional Authorities: Who is Who and What Do They Do?
  F. Panel–Gulf of Mexico Data Information Resources and Ocean Users
  G. Process Next Steps
  H. Facilitated Task Force Discussion

I. Overview of Action Items, Closing Remarks
J. Public Input Opportunity and Discussion
III. Appendices
A. Agenda
B. Task Force Member Participation List

II. Discussion Highlights

A. Welcome and Opening Remarks

1. Tribal Acknowledgement. Eric Poncelet, Facilitator with Kearns & West, offered a tribal acknowledgment at the start of the Task Force Meeting. He explained that BOEM acknowledges the importance of Tribal Nations in this process. BOEM's tribal partners are integral to achieving effective coordination around the future of offshore renewable energy in the Gulf of Mexico. BOEM respects tribal sovereignty and self-governance and will continue to engage federally recognized tribes through government-to-government consultations.

2. Amanda Lefton, Director, BOEM. Director Amanda Lefton welcomed participants to the Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force Meeting and thanked Governor John Bel Edwards and BOEM's Gulf of Mexico Region for advancing opportunities for renewable energy within the Gulf of Mexico. Director Lefton explained that BOEM's role is driven by the need to: act on climate change and transition to a clean energy future, such as offshore wind; help create thousands of renewable energy jobs; develop offshore wind energy in a responsible and science-based manner; and robustly engage stakeholders to help mitigate impacts to ocean users and the marine environment.

Director Lefton explained that BOEM's Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 budget proposes resources for science research, staffing, and equitable stakeholder engagement related to renewable energy. With these resources, BOEM will continue to play a critical role in identifying offshore wind areas on the East and West coasts, advancing lease and sale notices, improving engagement processes for stakeholders, and involving intergovernmental coordination with agency partners.

Director Lefton emphasized that the Gulf of Mexico Region can play an integral role in innovating the offshore wind industry, particularly due to its expertise with infrastructure. She announced that BOEM has released a Request for Information (RFI) to collect comments on the potential for offshore renewable energy within the Gulf of Mexico. She encouraged participants to think innovatively when submitting comments. Director Lefton concluded her remarks by reiterating the importance of regional collaboration between agencies and stakeholders for responsibly advancing renewable energy initiatives within the Gulf.

3. John Bel Edwards, Governor of Louisiana. Governor John Bel Edwards welcomed Task Force members and members of the public to the inaugural Gulf of Mexico Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force Meeting. Governor Edwards began his remarks by highlighting the extreme weather events that have impacted Louisiana and neighboring states within the last year and emphasizing that he is committed to addressing climate change through innovative renewable energy policies. He relayed Louisiana's pledge of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 and highlighted the work being undertaken by the Louisiana Climate Initiatives Task Force to meet the State's clean energy goals.

Governor Edwards emphasized that Louisiana is a working coast, with many activities already occurring relating to oil and gas, commercial fishing, mineral activities, and sediment management. He reflected that this Task Force will be charged with navigating these existing conflicts with the addition of offshore wind. Governor Edwards underscored

the crucial role that offshore energy production currently plays in the State's funding related to coastal restoration efforts. He applauded bipartisan efforts within the Louisiana legislature to provide impact assistance funding for offshore wind energy, expand assistance available under the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA), and remedy inequities in federal assistance for existing oil and gas and offshore wind production.

4. Mike Celata, Regional Director for BOEM's Gulf of Mexico Region. Regional Director Mike Celata welcomed participants and thanked Governor Edwards and Director Lefton for their instrumental roles in the creation of the Gulf of Mexico Renewable Energy Task Force. He noted that the creation of this Task Force to explore renewable energy within the Gulf of Mexico is a local, state, federal, and tribal initiative that aligns with the Biden-Harris Administration's goal of pursuing renewable energy. Regional Director Celata declared this Task Force meeting as the official start of expanding the energy landscape within the Gulf of Mexico Region.

Working with the Department of Energy, BOEM has evaluated multiple renewable energy options in the Gulf, including wind, wave, tidal and solar. Regional Director Celata relayed that solar has the largest resource potential, while wind currently has the largest technical accessible resource potential. The RFI that BOEM published on June 11, 2021, offers 50 million acres within the Gulf of Mexico to be considered for potential offshore wind projects. The RFI also seeks public input on other forms of renewable energy to help create an integrated energy basin within the Gulf of Mexico. The agency anticipates hosting a renewable energy auction within two years.

5. Congressman Garrett Graves (LA-06), U.S. House of Representatives. Congressman Garrett Graves offered opening remarks to meeting participants. He highlighted that the Gulf is well positioned to deploy offshore wind technology due to the existing oil and gas infrastructure, which can help meet supply chain, fabrication, and design needs. Congressman Graves also highlighted the economic viability of offshore renewable energy. He cited a recent National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) study that determined one 600 MW Gulf of Mexico offshore wind facility could support $445 million gross domestic product (GDP) during construction, $14 million GDP during operating years, 4470 total jobs during construction, and 150 annual jobs during operating years.

Congressman Graves noted that the global energy demand is expected to increase 50% by 2050. As such, he encouraged the Task Force to remember the context of natural gas production and utilize all resources in the region.

B. Task Force Member Introductions & Agenda Review

Mr. Poncelet introduced meeting conveners and Task Force members, which included representatives from the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), elected officials and representatives, tribal nations, state and federal agencies, and local officials. The Task Force member participant list is available in Appendix B.

Mr. Poncelet then reviewed the meeting agenda, objectives, process guidelines, and structure, which included several series of presentations on the topics of background information and Task Force orientation, state renewable energy goals, offshore wind jurisdictional authorities, and data information resources. Presentations were followed by a Task Force discussion. A public input opportunity followed the formal adjournment of the Task Force meeting.

C. Background Information and Task Force Orientation

The purpose of this session was to communicate BOEM's role in future renewable activities within the Gulf of Mexico, particularly related to BOEM's Offshore Renewable Energy Program and leasing process. This session also reviewed the Task Force Charter to establish a common understanding of the role and future activities of the Gulf of Mexico Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force.

1. BOEM Offshore Renewable Energy Program Overview – Jim Bennett, BOEM. Jim Bennett, Manager for BOEM's Office of Renewable Energy Program (OREP), provided an overview of OREP and its role in the offshore wind process. He explained that BOEM oversees the development of energy and mineral resources on 2.5 billion acres on the outer continental shelf (OCS) in Alaska, the Pacific, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Atlantic.

Mr. Bennett noted that Atlantic states have outlined aggressive renewable energy goals, particularly related to offshore wind development efforts. He explained that BOEM anticipates 15–18 projects within the Atlantic over the next 10–15 years. Existing and anticipated offshore wind projects will require state and federal coordination to organize electrical resource requirements, workforce needs, and design considerations.

He highlighted key challenges and opportunities associated with offshore wind development related to employment, industrial synergies, turbine size, transmission, radar, wildlife, visual effects, navigation, and commercial and recreational fisheries. Mr. Bennett concluded his presentation by noting that these considerations are addressed through regulatory processes and interactions between agencies, intergovernmental Task Forces, and stakeholders.

2. Gulf of Mexico Task Force and Charter: Roles and Responsibilities – Idrissa Boube, BOEM. Idrissa Boube, Gulf of Mexico Task Force Coordinator and Analyst within BOEM's Office of Emerging Programs, reviewed the roles and responsibilities of the Gulf of Mexico Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force. Mr. Boube explained that Renewable Energy Intergovernmental Task Forces are initiated by a state Governor's request to BOEM, per the requirements of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCSLA). Task Forces serve as an information exchange to facilitate transparent consultation and coordination throughout all phases of a renewable energy project.

Mr. Boube reviewed the purpose of the Gulf of Mexico Task Force charter, explaining that it clarifies authority, membership, and roles and responsibilities of the Task Force. He invited any comments on the draft Gulf of Mexico Task Force Charter to be emailed to himself at Idrissa.Boube@boem.gov by July 6, 2021. Following this comment period, the charter will be finalized and posted to the BOEM Gulf of Mexico webpage.

BOEM will convene Gulf of Mexico Task Force meetings or webinars in coordination with Task Force members. Public information or materials generated from Gulf of Mexico Task Force meetings will be made available on the Task Force webpage at https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/state-activities/gulf-mexico-gom-intergovernmental-renewable-energy-task-force.

3. Leasing Process Review – David MacDuffee, BOEM OREP. David MacDuffee, Chief of Projects and Coordination for BOEM OREP, provided an overview of BOEM's area identification and leasing review processes. Mr. MacDuffee began his presentation by explaining that the renewable energy planning process is divided into four phases, including (1) planning and analysis, (2) leasing, (3) site assessment, and (5) construction and operations. Task Force engagement is encouraged throughout all phases; however, it is especially important during the planning and analysis phase because input provided helps to identify suitable areas for leasing. Mr. MacDuffee reviewed the points throughout the planning and analysis phase at which Task Force member and stakeholder input is requested to inform the leasing process, including the Planning, Request for Information (RFI), Call for Information and Nominations Area, Wind Energy Area (WEA), and Lease Area phases.

The Planning phase involves a high-level screening and initial identification of areas that may be suitable for potential offshore wind development. The Planning phase area is likely reduced into an RFI area to collect additional information to determine the level of interest in offshore wind leasing and shed light on the suitability of an area for wind development. Mr. MacDuffee noted that the Gulf of Mexico RFI has been published for public input.

Public comments collected during the RFI phase help to refine and develop the Call Area. The Call Area is published in the Federal Register for a Call for Information and Nominations of areas to be considered for leasing. This phase is

required by the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OSCLA). Then, the Wind Energy Area is identified and serves as the baseline for conducting additional environmental analysis on the consequences of issuing an offshore wind lease. Mr. MacDuffee noted that the Wind Energy Areas have the potential for further division into separate Lease Areas. Mr. MacDuffee then reviewed the New York Bight Area Identification and leasing review process as an example.

4. Clarifying Questions.

- *Question: In the New York Bight, what was the maximum water depth in those two areas?*
    - *Response:* BOEM limited the call area to the 60-meter bathymetric line, so it was shallow and would support fixed-foundation types.
- *Question: Are there any steps in the area identification and lease review process where a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review is required, outside of the wind energy area?*
    - *Response:* Yes. The initial NEPA analysis during the wind energy area phase focuses on identifying the potential consequences on the marine environment because of lease issuance. This would involve the lessee conducting C4 surveys, deploying a buoy, or a tower to measure wind speed and other meteorological and oceanographic conditions. Once authorized by BOEM, the lessee has an opportunity to present a Construction and Operations Plan (COP) to BOEM for further approval. At that point, there would be additional NEPA analysis, such as an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and reviewing the COP in greater detail.
- *Question: To follow up, how does the data collection for the initial NEPA review differ from the NEPA analysis conducted at the wind energy area?*
    - *Response:* Once the COP is submitted, BOEM will have greater details on the facility design, proposed technologies, and methods of installation. The secondary NEPA review would involve the same process but with a more comprehensive analysis involving an EIS. The initial NEPA analysis would likely only be an Environmental Assessment (EA)
- *Question: Can you provide additional detail on how BOEM is coordinating with the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) for the New York Bight related to the tug and tow industry?*
    - *Response:* BOEM did eliminate a portion of the Hudson south area due to the overlapping tow lane. For a variety of reasons, there were also two northern wind energy areas that BOEM did not propose for leasing at the current time. One of the reasons for that was potential interaction with the tow lane. We have one remaining area where we're continuing to work with the USCG to see if there is any flexibility with that tow lane. Ultimately, we just issued the proposed sale notice, so we're very early in that process before we identify a final sale area. We will continue to work with the USCG and maritime area before we issue a final sale area.
- *Question: Is BOEM planning on pursuing a programmatic agreement to address its Section 106 concerns related to the early assessment efforts that typically take place with these leases? Several of the state wind farm application processes along the East Coast have been successful.*
    - *Response:* BOEM is aware that this has been successful on the East Coast. While BOEM is not ready to decide yet, we are discussing best practices with colleagues on the East Coast to determine the best path forward.

D. Updates – Overview of State Renewable Energy Goals

The purpose of this session was to acknowledge and share updates on states' renewable energy goals and any recent or upcoming renewable energy activities involving the Gulf of Mexico.

1. State of Louisiana – Harry Vorhoff. Harry Vorhoff, Deputy Director for the Louisiana Governor's Office of Coastal Activities, provided an overview of ongoing efforts within Louisiana to promote offshore wind development in the Gulf of Mexico. In 2020, Governor John Bel Edwards signed the Climate Executive Order to help improve coastal resilience and address the impacts of climate change, including greenhouse gas emissions, increasing temperatures, and rising sea levels. Mr. Vorhoff emphasized that this is a coastal priority due to the state's need to restore and protect coastal ecosystems.

In support of this Executive Order, Governor Edwards established a Climate Initiatives Task Force comprised of over 140 experts and stakeholders to develop strategies and policies that achieve renewable energy targets. In addition to the Climate Initiatives Task Force, Mr. Vorhoff highlighted local government and interagency coordination efforts that are being undertaken by the Governor's Office to advance its clean energy economy.

Mr. Vorhoff concluded his presentation by previewing Louisiana Wind Week, a virtual event set to occur between June 21 – 15, 2021. This event was hosted by the Governor's Office to discuss offshore wind within the Gulf of Mexico.

2. State of Alabama – Chris Blankenship. Chris Blankenship, Commissioner for the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, provided an update on Alabama's renewable energy goals and activities. Mr. Blankenship relayed that Alabama is currently gathering information related to offshore wind. Alabama has been conducting exploratory outreach with key stakeholders, including the Alabama State Port Authority, Alabama Department of Environmental Management, Baldwin and Mobile Counties, Public Service Commission, energy utilities, and environmental groups. During these meetings, Mr. Blankenship has heard opportunities for increased employment and industrial synergies because of offshore wind; stakeholders have also raised concerns related to maritime navigation, wildlife, commercial and recreational fisheries, viewshed impacts, and tourism.

Following the Task Force meeting, Mr. Blankenship plans to brief the Alabama Governor's Office on key meeting highlights and discuss the next steps for offshore wind exploration with the state. He concluded his presentation by highlighting that he looks forward to collaborating with BOEM, conducting inclusive stakeholder engagement, and learning best practices from Louisiana and Atlantic states.

3. Clarifying Questions.

Mr. Poncelet invited clarifying questions. Task Force members had no clarifying questions regarding updates on state renewable energy goals.

E. Panel – Offshore Wind Jurisdictional Authorities: Who is Who, and What Do They Do?

The purpose of this panel session was to share information about the jurisdictional authority that federal agencies have over offshore wind energy activities.

1. United States Coast Guard – George Detweiler. George Detweiler, Team Leader for the U.S. Coast Guard's (USCG's) Office of Navigation Systems, reviewed the roles and responsibilities of the USCG, particularly related to offshore wind energy. Mr. Detweiler explained that the USCG is responsible for protecting all mariners, property, and the environment by promoting safe navigation and access routes. The USCG aims to be involved within every step of BOEM's renewable energy leasing process, though the Construction and Operations Plan (COP) is the most critical to the USCG as they can see the number, size, spacing, and axis of the proposed wind turbines. The USCG is involved in the Navigational Safety Risk Assessment (NSRA) by coordinating with and offering guidance to developers and BOEM on mitigating potential risks. Common deliverables from the USCG to BOEM include recommendations about the adoption of the wind farm layout, design considerations, and operating and reporting conditions. Mr. Detweiler concluded his presentations by noting the challenges associated with the USCG's involvement in the offshore wind process, including its limited authority and lack of a centralized, internal energy office.

2. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Marine Fisheries Service – Noah Silverman. Noah Silverman, NEPA Coordinator for the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS's) Southeast Region, reviewed the federal policies that mandate NMFS's roles and responsibilities related to offshore wind development within the Gulf of Mexico. Mr. Silverman explained that NMFS advises, comments, and provides conservation recommendations through the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA), and NEPA as a cooperating and adopting agency; provides biological opinion on proposed offshore wind projects through the Endangered Species Act (ESA); informs incidental take authorizations through the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA); and promotes interagency coordination to ensure regulatory alignment through Title 41 of the Fixing America's Surface Transport Act (FAST-41).

3. NOAA National Ocean Service Coastal Zone Management Act – David Kaiser. David Kaiser, Senior Policy Analyst with NOAA's Office for Coastal Management, offered an overview of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA), specifically the federal consistency compliance review process as it relates to offshore wind energy. Mr. Kaiser explained that the CZMA is a voluntary program coordinated by the NOAA that encourages coastal states to develop a comprehensive coastal management program that is approved by NOAA and implemented at the state level.

The CZMA includes a federal consistency compliance provision that gives states review authority for federal actions that could affect the state's coastal uses or resources. The federal consistency compliance provision helps to facilitate early coordination between state and federal agencies and provides a forum for identifying and resolving issues. This process is the primary process by which a state can address issues related to the review of the offshore wind development process.

Mr. Kaiser offered examples of how renewable energy projects within the Gulf of Mexico OCS might qualify for a CZMA review between state and federal agencies. He also offered resources for how participants can learn more about NOAA programs, regulations, and policies.

4. Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement – Cheri Hunter. Cheri Hunter, Renewable Energy Program Manager for the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE), reviewed BSEE's role in renewable energy. Ms. Hunter explained that BSEE operates as the authority on safety and operational issues, overseeing workplace safety and environmental compliance during the lifecycle of a renewable energy project. She emphasized that BSEE helps to ensure workplace and personnel safety within the rapidly growing offshore wind industry. She highlighted that BSEE works in conjunction with BOEM and other federal agencies and organizations, such as the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), USCG, and the Global Offshore Wind Health Safety Organization (G+), tribal groups, and other stakeholders, to ensure compliance measures and robust safety programs are in place.

BSEE has a great deal of expertise in collecting and analyzing data related to risk analysis to ensure that workforce risks are properly identified and addressed. BSEE is currently developing Health, Safety, and Environmental (HSE) Guidelines for offshore wind construction, installation, and operations activities. BSEE is also seeking to harmonize standards between to U.S. and European countries. The agency also deployed a text messaging system, called BSEE Safe, where workers can report safety incidences.

5. Clarifying Questions.

- *Question: What are the jurisdictional considerations between siting transmission lines spanning from federal waters to states' coastlines?*
    - *Response:* Once a lease is issued by BOEM, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has easement authorization to take the power transmission line to shore. BOEM's jurisdiction only resides in federal waters, which typically begin at approximately three miles offshore. States and the USACE have

jurisdiction within state waters. Through CZMA, the state can review the placement of the transmission lines because they run through state waters.

F. Panel – Gulf of Mexico Data Information Resources and Ocean Users

The purpose of this panel session is to learn about the various data information resources and stakeholders specific to the Gulf of Mexico Outer Continental Shelf.

1. National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) – Walt Musial. Walt Musial, Offshore Wind Lead for NREL, offered an overview of recent NREL studies to assess the feasibility and economic potential for offshore wind energy within the Gulf of Mexico. Their studies found that the Gulf of Mexico could potentially have cost-competitive utility-scale offshore wind by the early 2030s, as well as significant job creation. They also indicated that Texas and Louisiana have the most viable wind resources.

The advantages of pursuing offshore wind within the Gulf region include its typically mild climate, existing oil and gas supply chain, and shallow water quantities. These considerations help to decrease operating costs and leverage existing infrastructure. Mr. Musial reviewed challenges related to offshore wind in the Gulf of Mexico, including hurricane exposure, relatively low average wind speeds, and softer soils. He explained these challenges can be addressed through turbine and substructure technology and design adaptations.

Looking forward, NREL will seek to update its economic model to address larger turbines and lower finance rates, analyze new wind resource data, conduct a hurricane risk assessment and hurricane resilient turbine research, and complete a supply chain study for offshore wind within the Northeast.

2. Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC-NOAA) - John Walter. John Walter, Deputy Director for Science and Counseling Services for the SEFSC, explained how the SEFSC monitors Trust Resources within the Gulf of Mexico. The Gulf of Mexico is a significant Trust Resource for fisheries, which results in high economic profitability for commercial and recreational fishers. He underscored that it is a high priority for these stakeholders to maintain their access to these valuable fisheries with the development of offshore wind. Marine mammals, sea turtles, and coral habitats are additional Trust Resources the SEFSC is mandated to monitor within the Gulf.

Mr. Walter noted that there are opportunities for the SEFSC to deploy advanced technology, including remotely operated vehicles and artificial intelligence, to better understand marine habitats within potential Wind Energy Areas. He highlighted that the SEFSC has been doing this successfully for the oil and gas industry for many years.

3. BOEM Marine Cadastre and Ocean Reports – Christine Taylor. Christine Taylor, Geographer for BOEM, reviewed two of BOEM's map-based tools that can be used for collaboration and decision-making in an ocean space. The first tool that Ms. Taylor highlighted was Marine Cadastre. This map tool provides national and large regional geospatial data. It includes over 300 map layers that users can access, arrange, annotate, and download, as needed.

The second tool, Ocean Reports, allows users to create custom areas and reports about the underlying map information for a specific area. This tool includes 80 layers, 67 infographics, and six chapters related to energy and minerals, transportation and infrastructure, natural resources, oceanographic and biophysical, economics and commerce, and general information. It enables users to analyze site maps, understand site characterization, gather high-level statistics, and generate custom reports. This tool is meant for use by project stakeholders, the press, and industry.

4. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Migratory Birds – Randy Wilson. Randy Wilson, Supervisory Wildlife Biologist for the USFWS, offered an overview of migratory birds and their pathways within the Gulf of Mexico. He explained that approximately 400 species utilize the Gulf of Mexico during their annual lifecycle. Nearly half of the birds that

breed in North America migrate through the Gulf of Mexico during the year, as well as birds traveling from the coast of Africa. Bird migration typically occurs during the spring (March-May) and the fall (August – October); however, this is not true for all species.

Mr. Wilson reviewed the methods for assessing bird movements, which include individual observations, community-level observations, tagging studies, and radar ornithology. He highlighted that the Texas Coast, Mississippi River Delta, barrier islands, and OCS shelf-break are popular breeding, stop-over, and/or foraging spots for migratory birds. He concluded his presentation by emphasizing that the USFWS stands ready to assist throughout the wind energy planning process.

5. BOEM Wind Resource Analysis - Angel McCoy. Angel McCoy, Meteorologist for the Office of Renewable Energy Programs within BOEM, reviewed the wind resource analysis that occurs to assist BOEM in the identification of areas for potential wind energy area development. Ms. McCoy reviewed meteorological data from hub sites located in the western, central, and eastern portions of the Gulf of Mexico. She explained that this data and modeling helps to inform potential wind farm array and layout considerations. Areas with wind speeds of seven meters per second or greater are generally considered to be suitable wind resources for wind development.

Off the coast of Corpus Christie, Texas, wind speeds are expected to be around nine meters per second; wind speeds off the coast of Galveston, Texas, are approximately eight meters per second; and wind speeds located off Mobile, Alabama are around seven meters per second. Ms. McCoy noted that while hub sites are measuring surface-level wind speeds, researchers and developers are still able to conclude potential turbine location and direction. Site-specific data collected by the developer during the planning process further defines facility considerations.

6. BOEM Transmission –Josh Gange. Josh Gange, Renewable Energy Program Specialist for BOEM's Office of Renewable Energy Program, offered an overview of BOEM's transmission planning process. Mr. Gange noted that there are an array of agencies and interests involved in the transmission planning process within the federal government, the grid operator's industry, state utilities, state legislatures, and more.

Under BOEM's process, there are two paths for transmission within an offshore wind project: transmission as part of an offshore wind lease, or transmission under a Right of Way (ROW) Grant. When the transmission is included as part of an offshore wind lease, the lessee negotiates with state entities to determine the appropriate landfall and grid locations and receive access to an easement to shore. Mr. Gange noted that this is the easier option.

For the ROW Grant process. OSCLA requires a competitive process unless BOEM determines that there is competitive interest. If there is competitive interest, BOEM will utilize a competitive process to award the Grant. BOEM will conduct an environmental analysis and assess multiple-use conflicts before deciding on whether to issue a ROW Grant. Through this pathway, the Grant holder will propose the project within one year of issuance of the ROW in the form of a General Activities Plan (GAP). The GAP will trigger additional NEPA processes and consultations with other agencies before any approval and installation, or denial.

7. Clarifying Questions.

- *Question: Does the NREL modeling include transmission costs?*
    - *Response:* No, it does not include the onshore transmission cost since we have not yet studied the points of interconnect for those variables. However, it does include the offshore wind substation, export cabling, and electrical infrastructure needed to build the wind farm.
- *Question: Are there other studies that include transmission costs within their modeling?*
    - *Response:* Yes, there are studies on the West and East Coasts that are currently in progress; however, the exact transmission costs have not been defined yet. The benefits of transmission

aggregation and cooperation are becoming economically clear. This is an area we should be examining closely moving forward.

- *Comment: Transmission costs can be very variable. When an interconnecting resource would like to connect to a transmission provider system, the transmission provider will conduct an electrical modeling study to understand the upgrades that will be needed to achieve the interconnector's needs. It is on a case-by-case basis. More data will likely emerge in the coming years as offshore wind development increases.*
- *Question: When are transmission considerations incorporated into the planning process? Transmitting the power generated by offshore wind to the electrical grid is critically important.*
    - *Response:* Other energy sources that connect to the electrical grid at a certain location also need to be considered, not just offshore wind energy. Josh Gange from BOEM will be offering a presentation on BOEM's transmission process momentarily where he will address this topic.
- *Question: Does the USFWS have a graphic or information that explains the altitude at which migratory species fly?*
    - *Response:* The USFWS gets some related information from weather radars. Migratory birds typically fly 1000 – 5000 feet above the water, though their altitude lowers as they fly closer to the shore and varies based on climatic conditions. This is an area of ongoing research for the USFWS.

G. Process Next Steps

Tershara Matthews, Chief of Emerging Programs in BOEM's Gulf of Mexico Region, reviewed next steps regarding BOEM's call for information and area identification. Ms. Matthews explained that the Request for Information has been released, and its comment period will be open until July 26, 2021. Following that, BOEM will release a Call for Information to inform the Wind Energy Areas (WEA). Once the WEA has been identified, BOEM will draft an Area Identification memo.

BOEM will begin the Environmental Assessment as part of the NEPA process once the WEA is announced. Then, BOEM will confirm the lease areas, auction format, and publish a Proposed Lease Sale Notice (PSN). The Proposed Lease Auction is anticipated to occur in December 2022. Ms. Matthews encouraged industry participants and members of the public to begin providing comments and information to BOEM now regarding this offshore wind activity.

Ms. Matthews noted that questions should be directed to herself at Tershara.Matthews@boem.gov. Media inquiries should be directed to Hillary McKey, Public Affairs Specialist for BOEM, at Hillary.McKey@boem.gov, and John Filostrat, Director of Public Affairs for BOEM, at John.Filostrat@boem.gov.

H. Task Force Discussion

Eric Poncelet facilitated a discussion among Task Force members and presenters. A summary of this discussion is provided below.

- *Comment: Thank you to Director Lefton and Regional Director Celata for hosting this Task Force meeting. And thank you to the presenters for providing an excellent baseline of understanding of existing conditions and resources within the Gulf of Mexico.*
- *Question: Is NREL able to provide additional information on the supply chain study that they are conducting with the Business Network for Offshore Wind related to evaluating existing capacity for offshore wind infrastructure development and deployment?*
    - *Response:* The study is just beginning, so NREL is not able to provide too much information currently. However, the study will examine how many ports will be required to accommodate a growing offshore wind industry. Some of this infrastructure already exists, but it might have to be augmented to account for larger volumes of steel and substructure production. Another consideration is the development and deployment of U.S.-flagged offshore installation wind vessels. The benefit of the Gulf of Mexico initiating

offshore wind exploration later than other states is that a lot of these supply chain considerations will be built and operating by the time the Gulf is ready to deploy offshore wind.

- *Comment/Question: I am excited by the opportunity to play a role in the success of any offshore energy development within the Gulf of Mexico, especially this new opportunity for offshore wind. Another area of interest relates to transmission and how the energy generated from offshore wind farms will be transported back to land-based energy infrastructure. I know there might be hurdles to overcome, but I look forward to continuing the work of the Task Force to address any challenges.*

I. Overview of Action Items, Closing Remarks

Eric Poncelet shared that the presentations and meeting recordings will be made available following the Task Force Meeting. He noted that Kearns & West will also develop a meeting summary, which will be posted to the Gulf of Mexico Task Force webpage

Regional Director Mike Celata offered closing remarks to formally adjourn the Task Force Meeting. He thanked Governor John Bel Edwards and Director Amanda Lefton for their support in coordinating offshore renewable energy development in the Gulf of Mexico. He thanked Task Force Members and members of the public for their participation throughout the meeting. Regional Director Celata emphasized the role that renewable energy plays in support the U.S. energy independence and portfolio. Mr. Celata reiterated that BOEM is anticipating offering a Proposed Lease Sale Auction for an offshore renewable energy project in December 2022. He encouraged meeting participants to provide comments on the Request for Information.

J. Public Input Opportunity and Discussion

Following the official adjournment of the Task Force meeting, Mr. Poncelet invited members of the public to share questions or comments on all topics covered during the Task Force meeting. A summary of this discussion is provided below.

- *Comment/Questions: I am optimistic about leveraging the regional supply chain and local researchers to support the deployment of offshore renewable energy in the Gulf of Mexico. What is the potential for BOEM leveraging existing infrastructure within the Gulf of Mexico to reduce the cost of investment and speed up the delivery of wind power? For example, offshore wind turbines might be able to be engineered onto existing decommissioned oil and gas platforms. There is the potential for battery storage and production of green hydrogen. There are also plugging and abandonment (P&A) offshore wells that could be engineered for upcoming thermal energy. Finally, the opportunity exists to use oil and gas pipelines as a conduit for transmission.*
    - *Response:* BOEM is seeking input on potential ideas for offshore renewable energy through the open Request for Information (RFI). Please provide as much detail as possible within that RFI related to these ideas.
- *Comment: To address a question that came up during the Task Force Discussion, the Business Network for Offshore Wind is working with NREL and industry partners to develop detailed projections for the supply chain capacity needed to support the first phase of supply chain development. More importantly, studies have revealed that up to 40% of offshore wind supply chain costs overlap with the offshore oil and gas industry costs. Within the Gulf of Mexico, we have specialized experience that is needed to plan, manufacture, and build an offshore wind farm. This is critical because a recent economic report noted that the rapidly developing economic opportunity of offshore wind will exceed $100 million over the next ten years. The Gulf of Mexico has a unique opportunity to play in unlocking this opportunity. Thank you to BOEM and the Task Force members for the opportunity to partner. We look forward to partnering with everyone else on this call.*
- *Question: Thank you for an interesting meeting. During Mr. MacAffee's presentation, he mentioned that BOEM may skip the Call for Information phase if enough information is collected during the Request for Information (RFI).*

I have heard from at least a dozen people that maps are circulating with specific lease areas already identified. Is this true? If so, does BOEM plan to distribute these maps to the fishing industry so they can be fully informed on the RFI?

- *Response:* There are no Wind Energy Areas (WEAs) currently defined within the Gulf of Mexico. To clarify, the Call for Information is required; it is the RFI phase that is optional. The RFI Area comprises the entire Central Planning Area (CPA) and Western Planning Area (WPA) of the Gulf of Mexico, excluding the portions of those areas located in water depths greater than 1,300 meters. The process is to narrow down potential WEAs as we move forward.

- *Question: The RFI does show a map of potential interest areas, so maps are being circulated by BOEM as part of the RFI, but it is only as areas of interest, not specific to potential lease areas. Does BOEM intend to include a "Buy American" clause within their lease conditions?*
  - *Response:* BOEM is not able to answer that question now.
- *Comment/Question: Shell is excited to see this Gulf of Mexico opportunity and plans to be active participants moving. Thank you for the presentations and the opportunity to provide public input. And thank you to BOEM for setting an optimistic tone regarding multi-use conflicts within the Gulf. Does BOEM see an opportunity to compile existing information and data into a public-private partnership? What would be needed to facilitate data management resourcing? I do not know whether the Marine Cadastre database is sufficient as it is currently designed. Perhaps the states on the Task Force could coordinate with their respective Governors to stand up a cohesive mechanism, specifically related to the siting of offshore wind, that could run parallel to Task Force activities.*
  - *Response:* The goal of the Task Force is to start collecting data as soon as possible. There is a lot of information and data that need to be gathered effectively and shared with stakeholders. BOEM is not able to confirm today the possibility of a public-private partnership.
- *Question: Would each entity support hurricane-proof wind turbine technology within the Gulf of Mexico, particularly as it relates to floating wind or non-traditional turbines? Have parties in the Task Force considered this kind of support from Gulf of Mexico-based or U.S.-based companies? Secondly, how is commercial interest in a specific lease area determined? If there is no interest by other commercial parties, what is the process after that determination is made? How is the transmission from electricity versus hydrogen pipeline considered within the Gulf of Mexico? Lastly, in European countries, there are sailing vessels that generate electricity in real-time. How would a vessel like that operate within U.S. waters and be viewed by BOEM, the USCG, and other energy stakeholders?*
  - *Response:* A lot of these questions go beyond the scope of this meeting. Speaking to the competitive determination process, we typically receive industry input during the RFI to further define the area. Once we publish the Call for Information, BOEM would determine whether there is a competitive interest. There are other factors to consider, including environmental constraints and geographic overlap.
- *Comment: I want to thank Randy Wilson from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the informative presentation about birds. Offshore wind collision risks to nocturnal migratory birds are thus far not well evaluated in the Atlantic, so I'm glad it's on your radar early in the process in the Gulf. We urge USFWS to evaluate nocturnal migrant flight activity and collision risk offshore, within Gulf wind energy areas, and not just from land, if that is not already being done. I assume this would entail using radar on stable platforms.*
- *Comment: BOEM and BSEE consider financial assurances that would cover full decommissioning and removal of all infrastructure for renewable wind farms within the Gulf of Mexico. We would like to see the increasing cost of decommissioning being taken into consideration.*

- *Question: For David Kaiser, is the Coastal Management Program in the Gulf of Mexico considering including renewable energy activities in their activities list, so states may automatically receive a federal consistency review, as opposed to having to go through this process at a later date?*
    - *Response:* The Coastal Management Program would need to look at each state's federal consistency list to see whether they included the renewable energy program. To qualify for automatic review, states would also need to propose a geographic location description in federal waters in consultation with BOEM. The states would also have to conduct a coastal effect analysis in that area, and the Coastal Management Program would need to approve that. No state has contacted NOAA yet regarding the development of this.
- *Question: I am concerned by the lack of Task Force member representation from Texas. How can we help engage Texas elected officials and decision-makers to promote offshore wind within the Gulf?*
    - *Response:* There are several representatives from the state of Texas participating in today's Task Force meeting. BOEM will follow up with you to share their contact information.
- Question: I am very glad to see this initiative. Under this RFI, is there an allowance for submitting proposed areas under subpart j of 585? Additionally, EXCIPIO was just awarded a grant to repurpose offshore platforms in the Gulf of Mexico for renewable energy purposes, so we have resources to assess that are of interest.
    - Response: If you would like to recommend other uses outside of offshore wind, please submit your comment to the RFI.
- *Question: Thank you to the speakers for their presentations today. Will BOEM be considering fixed bottom or floating wind turbines.*
    - *Response:* The RFI is requesting input on these types of considerations, so please provide your comment there if you have feedback.
- *Question: We are very interested in the potential for offshore wind energy on the East Coast and the Gulf of Mexico. Will the existing oil and gas industry and supply chain within the Gulf of Mexico help to expedite the 2030 milestone of the Gulf acquiring competitive wind energy projects?*
    - Response: I think the experience will allow us to continue collaborating effectively moving forward.
- *Question:* BOEM was very proactive in reaching out to states and the oil and gas industry to examine potential resource conflicts and decommissioned infrastructure. How is BOEM and industry planning to address the installation of transmission cables with the spiderweb of oil and gas pipelines? Will these cables be buried?
    - *Response:* That is a very good question. We do not have an answer at this time but are continuing to evaluate it.
- *Question: How do we ensure that these renewable energy initiatives survive changes in political party leadership on the state and federal level? How can we assure clients that these opportunities won't be undone by changes in a political party?*
    - *Response:* BOEM is not able to comment on this.
- *Question: Does BOEM have any anticipated plans of convening a similar meeting to discuss other offshore renewable energy technologies, such as offshore geothermal and wave technologies?*
    - *Response:* BOEM will decide on this once we have reviewed the comments made on the RFI.

III. Appendices

A. Agenda

Gulf of Mexico Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force Meeting
June 15, 2021
9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Webinar Information (Webex)
URL for members of the public:
https://kearnsandwest.webex.com/kearnsandwest/onstage/g.php?MTID=ec91cc07e392b2fb2275f1a7d10c8adf9
Audio Conference: 1-844-621-3956 (U.S. Toll Free), +1-415-655-0001 (U.S. Toll)
Access code: 187 263 9610

**Registration is required to attend the Task Force meeting*
Register here: https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/gulf-mexico-intergovernmental-renewable-energy-task-force-meeting

Meeting Purpose and Objectives

- Facilitate coordination and consultation among federal, state, local, and tribal governments regarding offshore wind energy and the renewable energy leasing process on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) in the Gulf of Mexico.
- Establish a common understanding of the role and future activities of the Gulf of Mexico Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force.
- Update the Task Force and stakeholders on recent state activities.
- Provide opportunities for public input on the topics being considered by the Task Force.

Note: Agenda sessions will include time for facilitated dialogue among Task Force members.

Time (CT)	**Item**	
8:45 a.m.	***Join the Webinar***	
9:00 a.m.	**Webinar Instructions & Guidance**	• Eric Poncelet, Facilitator, Kearns & West (K&W)
9:05 a.m.	**Welcome & Opening Remarks**	• Tribal Invocation • Amanda Lefton, Director, BOEM • John Bel Edwards, Governor of Louisiana • Mike Celata, Regional Director, BOEM Gulf of Mexico Region
9:35 a.m.	**Task Force Member Introductions & Agenda Review**	• All Task Force Members • Eric Poncelet, Facilitator, K&W
9:55 a.m.	**Background Information & Task Force Orientation**	• BOEM Offshore Renewable Energy Program (OREP) Overview – Jim Bennett, BOEM • Task Forces and Charter: Roles and Responsibilities – Idrissa Boube, BOEM • Leasing Process Review – David MacDuffee, BOEM OREP

		• Clarifying questions
10:40 a.m.	***Break***	
10:55 a.m.	**Updates – Overview of State Renewable Energy Goals**	• State of Louisiana – Harry Vorhoff • State of Alabama – Chris Blankenship • Q&A
11:25 a.m.	**Panel – Offshore Wind Jurisdictional Authorities: Who is Who and What Do They Do?**	• United States Coast Guard – George Detweiler • NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service – Noah Silverman & David Dale • NOAA National Ocean Service CZMA – David Kaiser • BSEE – Cheri Hunter • Q&A
12:25 p.m.	***Lunch***	
1:25 p.m.	**Panel – Gulf of Mexico Data Information Resources and Ocean Users**	• National Renewable Energy Laboratory – Walt Musial • Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC-NOAA) - John Walter • BOEM Marine Cadastre and Ocean Reports – Christine Taylor • Q&A (Part 1) • USFWS Migratory Birds – Randy Wilson • BOEM Wind Resource Analysis - Angel McCoy • BOEM Transmission – Josh Gange • Q&A (Part 2)
3:00 p.m.	***Break***	
3:10 p.m.	**Process Next Steps**	• Tershara Matthews, Chief, Emerging Programs, BOEM
3:20 p.m.	**Facilitated Task Force Discussion**	• All Task Force Members • Eric Poncelet, Facilitator, K&W
3:50 p.m.	**Overview of Action Items, Closing Remarks**	• Eric Poncelet, Facilitator, K&W • Mike Celata, Regional Director, BOEM Gulf of Mexico Office
3:55 p.m.	***Task Force Meeting Adjourns***	
3:55 p.m.	***Break***	
4:00 p.m.	**Public Input Opportunity and Discussion**	
5:00 p.m.	***Adjourn***	

B. Task Force Member Participation List

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

Gulf of Mexico Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force Meeting

June 15, 2021

**Task Force members are noted alphabetically by agency.*

U.S. Elected Officials & Representatives

1. Garret Graves – U.S. House of Representatives (LA-06)
2. Kathee Facchiano – U.S. House of Representatives, Office of Congressman Clay Higgins (LA-03)
3. Senator Patrick McMath – Louisiana State Senate
4. Representative Joe Orgeron – Louisiana House of Representatives

Tribal Nations

1. Melissa Darden – Sovereign Nation of the Chitimacha
2. Johnna Fisher – Jena Band of Choctaw Indians

State of Louisiana

1. Jonathan Rhodes – City of New Orleans
2. Chett Chiasson – Greater Lafourche Port (Port Fourchon)
3. Archie Chaisson – Lafourche Parish
4. Don Pierson – Louisiana Economic Development (LED)
5. Chuck Brown – Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
6. Jack Montoucet – Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF)
7. Cheston Hill – Louisiana Division of Administration, Office of State Lands
8. Harry Vorhoff – Louisiana Governor's Office of Coastal Activities
9. Pat Arnould – Louisiana Governor's Office of Indian Affairs
10. Sam Jones – Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinator's Office (LOSCO)
11. Craig Greene – Louisiana Public Service Commission
12. Brandon Frey – Louisiana Public Service Commission
13. Richert Self – Port of Lake Charles
14. Melissa Darden – Sovereign Nation of the Chitimacha

State of Alabama

1. Chris Blankenship - Office of Alabama Governor Kay Ivey

State of Mississippi

2. Kristin Windham - Office of Mississippi Governor Tate Reeves

State of Texas

1. Mark Havens – Texas General Land Office (TXGLO)

Federal Agencies

1. David Saunders – Bureau of Indian Affairs

2. Cheri Hunter – Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE)
3. Shaikh Taimur – Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
4. Steven Sample – DOD
5. Nate McKenzie – Department of Energy (DOE)
6. Walter Musial – DOE
7. Robert Fares – Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)
8. Vicki Cornish – Marine Mammal Commission
9. Dusty Pate – National Park Service (NPS)
10. David Kaiser – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
11. Candace Nachman – NOAA
12. Kristin Ransom – NOAA
13. Heidi Stiller – NOAA
14. David Dale – National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
15. Noah Silverman – NMFS
16. Katherine Taylor – USACE, Galveston District
17. Dave Soileau – U.S. Army Corps (USACE), New Orleans District
18. David Blalock – U.S. Army Regional Environmental and Energy Office (REEO)
19. George Detweiler – U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)
20. Shawn Danoff – U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT)
21. Brian Hill - USDOT
22. Chuck Ardizzone – U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
23. Dawn Gardiner – USFWS
24. Christine Willis – USFWS
25. Gregory Steyer – U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)
26. Prianka Sharma – U.S. Small Business Administration (USSBA)