Meeting Summary

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
Gulf of Mexico Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force Meeting
Wednesday, February 2, 2022
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 February 2, 2022. The meeting was held remotely via webinar using the Zoom webinar platform. Participants included representatives from federal and state agencies, tribal nations, and local governments. Participating members of the public included representatives from industry, academic and research institutions, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Approximately 69 Task Force members and 319 members of the public attended.

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 (GOM).
- Provide an update on the leasing process in the Gulf of Mexico region, including comments received on the Call for Information (Call), and seek in-depth feedback from Task Force members to inform BOEM's selection of Wind Energy Areas (WEAs).
- Provide opportunities for public input on the topics being considered by the Task Force.

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

The meeting consisted of a combination of presentations with updates on OCS wind energy leasing in the GOM and an overview of comments received on the Call for Information, a breakout session opportunity for Task Force members to provide additional input on the Call (including reports out), and a public input opportunity. The meeting agenda is available in Appendix A.

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

This meeting summary is organized into the following sections:

II. Discussion Highlights

A. Welcome and Opening Remarks

1. Mike Celata, Regional Director, BOEM Gulf of Mexico Region. Mike Celata welcomed participants to the second Gulf of Mexico Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force Meeting. Mr. Celata explained the role of the BOEM within the Department of the Interior as the lead agency that oversees offshore wind. He outlined the purpose of the meeting to discuss potential areas that may be suitable for offshore renewable energy development in the federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico (GOM), provide information to the offshore renewable energy development decision-making process, and solicit feedback on Call Areas and environmental review process.

Mr. Celata conveyed the goal of the Biden-Harris Administration to deploy 30 gigawatts of offshore wind by 2030. To help achieve this goal, BOEM announced a path forward with up to seven new offshore lease sales by 2025: Central, Atlantic, Gulf of Maine, New York Bight, Carolinas, California, Oregon, Gulf of Mexico. Mr. Celata emphasized that this is the first time BOEM has released a roadmap of the regions under consideration for leasing as part of BOEM's commitment to maintaining open and transparent communication with all stakeholders. Feedback from stakeholders is vital to inform the identification and assessment of wind energy areas and reduce potential conflicts.

BOEM is still in the planning stages of the GOM offshore wind leasing. BOEM is currently assessing commercial interest and obtaining public input to increase awareness of the area. The draft environmental assessment was announced on January 11, 2022. It will consider potential environmental consequences and site characterization activities associated with the possibility of issuing wind energy leases in the western and central GOM.

2. Dakota John, Deputy Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana, Tribal Acknowledgement. Mr. Dakota John provided a tribal invocation to start the meeting.

B. Task Force Member Introductions & Agenda Review

Eric Poncelet, Kearns & West facilitator, introduced the 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 from the GOM region. The Task Force member participant list is available in Appendix B. Mr. Poncelet then reviewed the meeting agenda, objectives, process guidelines, and structure.

C. Background Information & Task Force Orientation

1. BOEM Renewable Energy Overview & Leasing Process Review – Tershara Matthews, BOEM. *Tershara* Matthews, Chief of Emerging Programs, Gulf of Mexico Regional Office, provided an overview of BOEM's mission responsibilities in managing the leasing and development of oil and gas, marine minerals, and renewable energy in the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf. In January 2021, President Biden issued Executive Order 14008, which called for a review of offshore renewable energy siting and permitting processes and taking stakeholder inputs and concerns into consideration every step of the way. Ms. Matthews outlined the offshore wind leasing process for 2021-2025, specifically detailing the Gulf of Mexico region, which is slated for leasing in late 2022 or early 2023. She described the phases of the renewable energy authorization process and noted that BOEM is currently in the planning and analysis phase and working towards the leasing phase. She added that BOEM convened the Gulf of Mexico Regional Task Force at the request of the governor of Louisiana. BOEM will support the region's renewable energy through stakeholder outreach and data collection

Ms. Matthews reported that BOEM has already issued the Request for Information (RFI) and the Call for Information (Call) for the GOM region and is undertaking the area identification and environmental reviews. Ms. Mathews explained that BOEM is at the stage of the area identification process which is part of the planning process. The planning process starts with the RFI to Call Area, wind energy area (area identification), and then ultimately a lease area, and she outlined the milestones for stakeholder engagements. Ms. Mathews shared maps detailing the Call Area and described the types of comments that have been received to date. BOEM is anticipating publishing a proposed lease sale notice in late 2022.

2. Environmental Process Review – Michelle Nannen, BOEM. Michelle Nannen, NEPA Coordinator, Gulf of Mexico Renewable Energy Project Environmental Assessment, described the purpose of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which provides the framework for protecting the environment by disclosing decision consequences and requires Federal agencies to consider the environmental impacts of their activities. BOEM is currently conducting an environmental assessment (EA) to disclose the potential impacts of issuing renewable energy leases on the Outer Continental Shelf. Ms. Nannen explained that the environmental assessment analysis will only be for issuing leases and the site assessment and characterization activities. This EA will be a programmatic assessment that will analyze the impacts for a single lease issuance as well as the high end of the scenario, incorporate analysis from background documents, and cover the entire Call Area. Environmental analysis of specific projects will be covered later in the process.

Ms. Nannen reviewed the schedule and the process for comments and participation. Scoping comments and other comments can be submitted on the EA through Regulations.gov. Input is also welcome through the Intergovernmental Task Force meetings. Scoping input should cover topics such as identifying exclusion areas, providing data on the affected environment, and identifying resources to be analyzed in the EA. For more information visit https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/state-activities/gulf-mexico-activities. There will be additional opportunity to comment on the Draft EA. Input for specific projects would occur much later in the process, during the Environmental Impact Statement process for a specific project, should a plan for a project be submitted to BOEM.

3. Marine Spatial Analyses to Inform Wind Energy Siting in the Gulf of Mexico – James Morris, National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Dr. James Morris, Marine Ecologist, described the work of the Marine Spatial Ecology division within the National Centers for

Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS). Dr. Morris emphasized the critical role of comprehensive whole ecosystem-level marine spatial planning for assessing the suitability of coastal-ocean regions for opportunities. He introduced the Ocean Reports Tool, an automated spatial analytical tool for any ocean neighborhood in U.S. waters that can be used as an early screening tool and increase ocean literacy. He described some of the data layers contained in the tool, including report area, depth/elevation, populated places, federal/state/county jurisdictions, congressional/legislative districts, federal statutes, tribal lands, natural resources, conservation areas, and layers for transportation and infrastructure. He noted that suitability modeling is a powerful way to consider the past, present, and future of a whole ecosystem and identify hotspots of potential conflict and increase understanding of area activities.

Dr. Morris also provided a demonstration of how suitability modeling can be applied as a standard approach to synthesizing the extensive data types and layers that describe human uses and natural resources of ocean regions. He described the next steps for NOAA, including providing marine spatial planning support directly to BOEM to aid in the identification of Wind Energy Areas, and in the future the goal to provide spatial science support for other aspects of the wind energy planning and development process.

4. Task Force Member Clarifying Questions

- *Question: To what extent is marine mammal information being collected with NCCOS, and how will the data be collected through this process going forward?*
    - *Response:* NCCOS is working with the Southeast Fisheries Science Center Regional Office and the Office of Protected Resources to compile the best available data on marine animals and has developed a new modeling approach that provides a combined data layer that considers the status and trends of the species across the entire Gulf of Mexico. NOAA recommends looking into the Gulf of Mexico Aquaculture Opportunity Atlas, which uses this new modeling. BOEM will also look for additional suggestions from public comments.
- *Question: Will there be efforts to undertake modeling and spatial analyses of onshore environments?*
    - *Response:* BOEM is looking at multiple factors as they go through this process, especially at points of connection. For example, BOEM is examining the areas where undersea cables can be brought back to shore and noting any existing pipelines that have been decommissioned as places to consider running the cables.
    - *Clarification: Does BOEM have dynamic data sets?*
    - *Response:* BOEM is working with NCCOS, and NCCOS has data from state agencies. If other agencies have information, BOEM would be happy to take that and add it to the model.
- *Comment/Question: A presenter spoke about the environmental assessment as programmatic and that it could potentially be used for more than one issuance, but it was also said that the analysis would cover the entire Call Area. Is the EA analyzing the potential for multiple sales or just one lease sale?*
    - *Response:* The EA will look at the entire Call Area. The EA will examine the impacts of both a single lease issuance and a potential scenario of cumulative lease issuances.
    - *Clarification: Will BOEM also look at alternatives that are carried forward?*
    - *Response:* Yes. BOEM is looking at different alternatives as well.
- *Question: What is BOEM's process for companies that have expressed an interest in areas that are outside of the Call Area?*

- *Response:* The company would have to submit an unsolicited lease request. BOEM will look at the application and create a Federal Register notice to ask if there is any competitive interest. That comment period will last about 45 days. If there is no competitive interest, BOEM will issue another notice of a non-competitive interest in the area and start the process of a non-competitive lease. This includes environmental analysis, consultation process, stakeholder engagement, and then producing a lease based on all the information. It is similar to the steps in the process for areas inside the Call Area, and there will be opportunities to engage the public and stakeholders with any concerns.

D. Task Force Member-Only Breakout Sessions

Task Force Members participated in member-only breakout sessions to share their agency's/organization's feedback or concerns on the Call Area and environmental review process. They broke out into smaller groups organized by tribal nations, state agencies, local governments, and federal agencies. Kearns & West staff facilitated the breakout groups. Notes were captured by BOEM staff. Key individual feedback, questions posed, and responses received are all listed below.

1. Tribal Nation

No formal comments were shared.

2. State Agency

Design and Process

- *In moving from the RFI phase to the Call Area phase, the area was reduced to the west of the Mississippi River. How was that determined?*
  - *Response:* Several environmental factors were considered, including mudslides and soil conditions. Rice's whales, the Gulf Island National Seashore, Breton Island, and large migratory routes for birds are in the area east of the Mississippi River as well.
- *Deeper ocean waters due south of the Mississippi River appear to now be outside of the Call Area. Is there a method to have that area brought back in later?*
  - *Response:* Companies interested in activities outside of the Call Area would need to go through an unsolicited lease request. BOEM would have to put out a Federal Register Notice. If the area is outside the Call Area, it would require additional environmental analysis.
- *Is there a fact sheet or standard operating procedure available regarding the unsolicited lease request?*
  - *Response:* BOEM will work on creating one to explain the process better. In the meantime, you can review the regulations.
- *In terms of the Call Area, participants expressed interest in onshore and offshore information from the states. What is the best path for sharing information with BOEM?*
  - *Response:* Providing shapefiles to Tershara Mathews is the best way to ensure those layers are included. Send the data/shapefiles as soon as possible so that BOEM can work with Dr. James Morris at NOAA to incorporate the information. BOEM is willing to meet with the states to discuss data layers that are available to be captured for initial analysis. BOEM will be inputting all layers into NOAA's models in the next few weeks.

- *Louisiana is working towards increasing offshore wind in the State's Climate Action Plan; five gigawatts by 2035 is the goal.*
- *Louisiana is keeping a close eye on the transmission lines crossing the federal to state boundary with regards to the right-of-way.*
    - *Response:* BOEM is looking at streamlining its approach to transmission issues.

Environmental Impacts

- *A participant expressed interest in investigating migratory patterns of fish species off the shore of Texas and noted that they plan to provide more information related to artificial reef locations.*
- *Will there be acoustic monitors included on the meteorological towers to analyze bat usage in the Call Area? It was suggested that BOEM work with Bat Conservation International.*
    - *Response:* BOEM is working to begin a study on bats and birds using the meteorological towers offshore.
- *At what elevation are wind speeds measured using the meteorological towers?*
    - *Response*: BOEM is working to make sure the meteorological towers will be monitored at the same height as the technology for the wind turbine heights. BOEM is also working with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) to develop a new study to better understand changes in technology and how that might play into the development of GOM offshore wind energy.
- *Louisiana is interested in implications and opportunities related to agriculture and aquaculture along the coast that might come into conflict with offshore energy development, such as transmission lines or support infrastructure onshore.*
- *Will sonar surveys be used to identify gaps in hardbottom substrates and reefs?*
    - *Response:* After a lease is issued, a developer must provide a Site Assessment Plan that indicates where they plan to survey the area using geophysical and geological surveys.

Stakeholder Engagement

- *Alabama is continuing to gauge activity and interest even though it is not within the Call Area.*
    - *Response:* BOEM sees Mississippi and Alabama playing a role in the Offshore Wind process in the GOM given the need for ports and facilities needed to service operations offshore.
- *Texas Parks and Wildlife Department will be providing comments on the Call Area. Texas General Lands Office (GLO) has no comments at this time since most activity is within state waters.*
    - *Response:* BOEM will reach out to Texas Parks and Wildlife for shapefiles and discuss their comments.
- *Were there any exclusion areas that have been identified from BOEM's fisheries engagement meetings?*
    - *Response:* No areas were identified at this time, but the fishermen indicated they want to see BOEM and NOAA working with the trawling industry to better understand the number of trawling vessels, where they trawl, and how often. Many fishermen have expressed interest in understanding how close they could get to the offshore wind energy infrastructure in order to fish.

    - *Response:* BOEM is working to have written summaries from the GOM Renewable Energy Fisheries Summit meetings uploaded to BOEM's website. There is an FAQ page on the website that allows you to see the questions and answers from those meetings. The link has been provided, https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/state-activities/gulf-mexico-fisheries-summit.
- *Louisiana's research universities stand ready to support any workforce development as well as technological advances in renewable energy activities offshore.*

3. Local Government

Design and Process

- *Everything that was shared in the presentations this morning matched expectations with regards to the Call Area and environmental review process. The Federal Government operates on longer timelines than most local governments would like, but that is expected.*
- *The Call Area seems fine. It is good that monopiles will not be installed, but it would be safer to move jackets and substructures instead. Also, from an economic perspective, there is an advantage (especially in Louisiana) to building these structures because local companies already have experience building these types of structures.*

Environmental Impacts

- *There is a lot of migratory action that takes place in the central GOM, so migratory birds are a topic of concern that will continue to surface throughout the environmental review process. Local government Task Force members are interested in seeing the results from the environmental assessment on this topic.*
- *There are environmental benefits associated with the development of offshore wind. For example, jackets and platforms become excellent artificial reefs for the recreational fishing industry in the Gulf.*
- *As this moves forward, it will be imperative to keep in mind the nearshore transmission corridors that are already in place and to utilize them to bring in the transmission lines to distribute the power. When examining new locations for bringing in transmission lines (other than existing corridors), other impacts to fisheries, marine navigation, shipping, etc. arise. The Gulf has an advantage compared to other regions because it already has a large corridor network that can be utilized.*

Stakeholder Engagement

- *A question that has come up in discussions with government entities is whether BOEM is selecting Call Areas that will be of interest to developers. Will the industry partners who will eventually invest in and develop the turbines find the Call Areas attractive and economically feasible? We need to make sure that we provide them with something sellable to developers.*
- *From a Louisiana standpoint, parishes and ports are uniquely positioned for the development of offshore wind energy. Louisiana ports are the service base for exploration and production within the Gulf, and they are positioning themselves to be key service points for everyday operations, construction, etc., of any type of energy. Thus, they feel that they are well-positioned to play a key role in offshore renewable energy and anticipate being key players.*

4. Federal Agency

Design and Process

- *Agency participants expressed some positive feedback on how the Call Area has been changed, but they also noted that there are some remaining areas of concern. It would be helpful to identify areas with the most conflicts versus areas with the least conflicts to begin narrowing and de-conflicting the potential areas.*
- *The potential for multiple wind facilities will impact decades-long time series and assessments. A BOEM/NOAA Federal survey mitigation implementation strategy is under development between the two agencies.*
- *It would be helpful to have access to copies of this meeting's PowerPoint presentations.*
- *The Call Area is overly large, and it is hard to identify the parts that should not be developed. If there are any shapefiles available that BOEM can overlay with other charts, that would be appreciated to determine if there are any areas that should not be developed. For example, data on shipping, safety, and navigation will be needed.*

Environmental Impacts

- *There is an area near Corpus Christi that is used by a lot of birds that is still in the Call Area. This information has already been provided in a letter to BOEM.*
- *The eastern boundary of the Call Area was moved west to accommodate trans-Gulf migration, but more information is needed to tell us how much of a conflict there might be. While much of the migration is outside of the Call Area, some migration crosses inside the current Call Area boundary. Agencies are waiting for appropriations to do research that will help with identifying these potential high conflict areas. Areas of high conflict might move through the process a little slower.*
- *Marine mammals are a primary concern for one agency, specifically spotted and bottlenose dolphins. Other species are usually found in deeper waters.*
- *Removing monopiles is good for marine mammals since monopiles generate significant sound during construction. Attenuation devices in Atlanta are being evaluated, and research shows the jacket style of smaller piles results in less attenuation.*
- *One agency is looking at entanglement risk in the Pacific region. There is a desire to see those calculations done in the GOM as well. If there are smaller species in the GOM Call Area, there may be less entanglement risk.*
- *Participants felt that the removal of the Mississippi Canyon from the Call Area was a good choice due to the previous overlap with the sperm whale population.*
- *Impacts on Rice's whales are also a concern in the eastern part of the Call Area. There is a need for continued collection of baseline data: before, during, and after construction. Continuation of programs like the Gulf of Mexico Marine Assessment Program for Protected Species (GoMMAPPS) is and should be a high priority. Passive acoustic monitoring research efforts and data collection should also contribute to baseline data.*
- *A participant raised concerns about construction emissions and adverse impacts in the Houston non-attainment area. It is unknown whether rough calculations of emissions from the closest part of the Call Area to non-attainment areas have been analyzed. Distance from that area is important because non-attainment new source review permitting is more strenuous.*
- *Participants recommended improvements in the general conformity of air-quality standards for federal actions.*

- *National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits will be required if discharges are made in federal waters. Permits would be issued by Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 6.*
- *Rice's whale was found in a depth band of 100-400 meters across the GOM. It is recommended that this band be removed given the endangered nature of this species.*
    - *BOEM Response:* BOEM staff asked for details on the timeline for the Rice's whale habitat analysis.
    - *NOAA Response:* NOAA staff responded that the timeline was not available for this Task Force meeting, but the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) protected resources team may be able to provide that information soon.
- *Research elements that should be considered to help guide aerial surveys include elevation, vulnerability analysis, and height of flight. These are critical to moving forward, and the results of the analysis may help determine a reduction in turbine speeds and ways to offset operations. Some of this research remains unfunded.*
- *Participants displayed a map that depicted the probability of occurrence for Rice's whale. This map has already been provided to BOEM. As noted earlier, the range for Rice's whale is 100-400 meters across the entire GOM and should be removed from the Call Area. There is a lack of on-the-water tracking to validate these areas, and there is not enough information to determine seasonality trends and insight on when the whales may be in the area. There is new information about a recently identified endemic population with a low population count, but population growth and stability are still unknown.*
- *Participants flagged the Gulf Islands National Seashore and Padre Island as concerns. Participants requested lightscape considerations that would decrease light impacting the dark night skies at the planning stage. Consideration should also be given to the NMFS/NOAA data about migratory marine species (sea turtles and birds) that create their habitats in the parks. Lastly, it is unclear what the impact of the lights at bottom of turbines or multiple turbines may be. Participants understood that the viewshed was not being addressed at this time and recommended that part of this be addressed at the planning stage because places like Padre Island are also considered wilderness. Avoiding visual disruption to the natural habitat would be ideal.*
- *Participants expressed concerns with potential impacts to submerged archeological resources, shipwrecks, and coastal and cultural landscapes. It is important to continue working with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) on cultural or sacred sites.*
- *One federal agency provided cost and timelines for research needs and outlined specific data needs, including migration altitude, migration pathways, home range size, foraging distance, flight behaviors, and avian vulnerability assessments.*

Stakeholder Engagement

- *Developers often conduct fisheries surveys in conjunction with activities to understand lease areas. Those activities should be included in the description of the actions prepared for NOAA.*
- *Recent outreach events were conducted with fishing communities and industries (e.g., shrimp, recreational, commercial). The shrimp fisheries highlighted concerns about scoping process. A key recommendation was to undertake comprehensive marine spatial planning to de-conflict wind from other use areas. An example of a tool that could be applied to this*

process is the Aquaculture Atlas. Given the lease sale schedule, the timeline to be able to conduct detailed spatial planning for the Call Area is short. Key topics for planning include socioeconomics, fisheries, survey mitigations, protected resources, and habitat.

- *The Department of Defense (DoD) clearinghouse is the central point of contact for several departments. The DoD requests additional information (like shapefiles) to be able to conduct a more detailed analysis of the Call Area proposal and identify areas that should be excluded. After the areas are defined, and shapefiles are provided, DoD will review them.*
    - *BOEM Response:* Ideally, BOEM would plan to de-conflict ahead of time to avoid those areas and would receive input from DoD before the area is defined. The Call Areas can be downloaded from the website. The Wind Energy Areas are still being drafted. BOEM can provide a shapefile of the areas of developer interest that were presented by Tershara during the presentation.
- *Participants requested that the three motions adopted by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Meeting be considered during this process. These motions were as follows: 1. Motion: To request that the Council work with NMFS and BOEM to ensure that the complete historical Gulf shrimp fishing effort data set is fully included and considered as part of the collaborative BOEM/NOAA spatial management analyses for evaluating potential sites for offshore wind energy facilities and transmission lines in the Gulf. 2. Motion: To request the Council to work with NMFS to ensure that BOEM enters into consultations with NMFS under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) concerning any action BOEM takes or proposes to take to authorize offshore wind energy development in the Gulf that may affect any ESA listed species or designated critical habitat. Such consultations should begin as early in the BOEM process as possible. 3. Motion: To convey to NMFS and BOEM that the analytical approach to spatial planning applied by NOAA in the AOA Atlas is comprehensive, transparent, objective and, therefore, an effective tool for supporting critical decision-making regarding competing ocean uses in the Gulf and for minimizing any adverse impacts of those uses on the Gulf fishing industry, including the siting of offshore wind facilities and transmission lines in the BOEM Call Area. 4. Motion: Pursuant to Section 305(b)(3) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the Council directs staff to write a letter to BOEM summarizing the comments and concerns from the Advisory Panel and the Council regarding potential impacts of offshore wind energy development, including offshore facilities and transmission lines, on all Essential Fish Habitat in the BOEM Call Area in the Gulf of Mexico. In addition, the Council directs staff to include a request for consideration of membership on the BOEM Gulf of Mexico Task Force.*
    - *BOEM Response:* BOEM attended that meeting, and the motions were shared.

E. Reports Back and Facilitated Task Force Discussion

After the breakout sessions, the BOEM note-takers presented highlights and key outcomes from their respective breakout sessions. Task Force members did not share any additional comments.

F. Public Input Opportunity

Following the invitation for a Task Force member discussion, Mr. Poncelet invited members of the public to share questions or comments on all topics covered during the Task Force meeting. Some questions and comments were shared orally by members of the public, while others were submitted via chat and read aloud by Mr. Poncelet. A recap of this discussion is provided below.

Design and Process

- *Question/Comment: I am working on a Department of Energy report on how to repurpose offshore oil and gas facilities for the blue economy. As part of that, I have noticed that the first wind developments and/or green hydrogen developments are likely to be in support of existing oil and gas facilities. During the previous conversations, there did not seem to be any discussion of the brownfield developments; they were all talking about the assumed developments on the greenfield leases. When the developers put in the support for their existing facilities, as part of the call for the lessees, is that going into sub-part J or under this Leasing Program?*
    - *Response:* If the leaseholder already has the lease for oil and gas, this will fall under subpart J as an existing lease. It will be Alternate Use because they are changing what their original plan was from an oil facility to something else, so it will fall under the Alternate Use Regulation.
    - *Clarification: If it is an undeveloped facility where they have a permit but have not developed anything, does that still fall under subpart J, or is that going to be treated as a greenfield?*
    - *Response:* It would depend on the location of the permit for their plans. Oil and gas leases do not have exclusivity just to oil and gas if they have not developed anything yet, but renewable leases do. So, if they have not developed anything yet, they would have to procure a renewable lease.
    - *Comment: One last comment I would like to make is that the study included wind turbines which might address some of the concerns about bird impacts.*

Environmental Impacts

- *Comment: I want to commend the Biden Administration and BOEM for launching this process. There was a conversation about offshore wind 10-15 years ago off Galveston that never materialized, and it is exciting that now the administration has made this a priority and it might happen. NREL data has shown that offshore wind could provide 166% of Texas' electricity needs, which has tremendous potential to help us decarbonize and meet our climate goals. We very much look forward to the environmentally responsible development of offshore wind.*
- *Question/Comment: Are there any planned studies to look at these major migratory pathways in the Gulf? Are there plans to track mortalities of avian species in the Gulf? There is a need to address these potential issues considering the migratory path.*
    - *Response:* BOEM is working closely with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to better understand the migratory pathways. BOEM also has a conceptual study that it is examining to understand the patterns. There are some elements that BOEM can address regarding turbines such as painting one of the blades black, which serves as a distraction for the birds, changing the blade pitch, and requiring that sensors be added to automatically turn on and off if birds are detected. The sensors would have the ability to be turned on and off during certain periods of bird migration.
    - *Response:* BOEM also has developed a study program with ideas that can be used to better assess the impact of renewable energy in the Gulf of Mexico on birds.
- *Comment: I have concerns about migratory birds. There are hundreds of millions of birds migrating in this area each year, once on a northbound and once on a southbound trip. A recent study in Science Magazine pointed out that North America has already lost approximately three billion birds, or about 29% of all birds, over the last 50 years. This is something that needs to be a significant part of BOEM's considerations. During migration, birds face significant weather that can put them at risk.*

- *Question: Will there be a MOTUS station requirement in the Gulf for birds? (Motus Wildlife Tracking System (MOTUS) is an international collaborative research network that uses coordinated automated radio telemetry to facilitate research.)*
    - *Response:* MOTUS was required on one of the Atlantic projects, and that is something that BOEM can take into consideration.
    - *Response*: If you have any additional information that you would like BOEM to take into consideration on this topic, please share with BOEM directly via email.

Stakeholder Engagement

- *Question/Comment: There are a couple of locations where there are potential conflicts with places identified by developers as areas of interest. This includes places around Chandeleur Sound, off Port Fourchon, and Grand Isle. I know there were comments that the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council provided to BOEM in terms of the fishery management species. Has BOEM been getting the same kinds of information from the Gulf States Commission (which is where the Menhaden fish species is regulated)?*
    - *Response:* No, BOEM has not received anything from the Gulf States Commission; however, BOEM has been giving presentations to the Commission.
- *Question:* How can existing offshore infrastructure (e.g., structures, pipeline right of way, etc.) be used by offshore leaseholders who wish to repurpose their infrastructure for offshore wind? How would that be managed (if practical) in the forthcoming lease sales?
    - *Response:* The leaseholder would have to request an alternate use for the infrastructure, and then BOEM will go through the process of evaluating the use. It also depends on the type of use; for example, if the leaseholder is trying to add a station or allow a substation on an existing platform, then the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) would be involved for inspections. There is an alternate use process in BOEM's regulations (section 585, subpart J) that the leaseholder would go through to utilize the existing infrastructure.
- *Comment: The emphasis of both GOM Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force Meetings has been on environmental review, and that is important and appropriate. It would be helpful if someone from BOEM could summarize the submissions and comments that have been made by potential lessees and developers, particularly as to economic concerns. What has been their level of interest and enthusiasm, and specifically what has been expressed by developers, potential developers, and potential lessees regarding the economics of offshore wind development in the GOM? I understand that some of this information may be confidential, but it would be helpful if you could offer a summary.*
    - *Response:* There are various business models and a wide range of opportunities here in the Gulf. There's pure electrical generation bringing cables back to shore, for example, and wind energy to create green hydrogen offshore. Some companies are still looking for that market. It varies by company and what their business model is.
    - *Response:* Many companies are interested in green hydrogen with wind turbines; they see it as more cost-effective. BOEM has the comments from industry developers posted, so they are publicly available for viewing.
- *Question/Comment: How can the Texas General Land Office (TX GLO) collaborate with BOEM to maximize offshore wind power generation in both state and federal waters? I believe it will be important to collaborate on siting and design of the transmission grid. To serve offshore wind in an economical and future-looking way, this grid could and should also serve the growing*

offshore carbon sequestration industry with carbon-free wind power to run injection pumps, about 10 megawatts per million metric tons per year.

  - *Response:* BOEM is happy to meet with GLO and have a discussion on offshore wind and carbon sequestration. Someone from the GLO participated in the Task Force meeting today.

- *Comment: If anyone is interested in learning more about the interests and concerns of the Gulf Shrimp Industry, please contact Glenn Delaney, Southern Shrimp Alliance, grdelaney@aol.com, 202-262-1955. The Alliance has submitted extensive comments to BOEM regarding the July 2021 RFI as well as concerning the December Call for Information. The Alliance will be submitting further comments on the environmental assessment process later this week. I would be happy to send you the Alliance's comments and answer any questions.*
- *Question/Comment: Are there any thoughts about how to centralize or share some of the problem statements, and more broadly, some of the technical challenges or hurdles specifically for the Gulf? Companies, such as Gulf Wind Technology and other tech startups, can be stimulated to accept the challenge, beyond what the Department of Energy and National Renewable Energy Laboratory share. There is an interest to share knowledge and stimulate more technical problem solving within the offshore wind community. I see this as an opportunity to demystify offshore wind, and to engage companies that could transpose their expertise from oil and gas into offshore wind.*
  - *Response:* One of the first places to start is the Gulf of Mexico conference scheduled for April 2022. BOEM has a room on the first day (Monday, April 25), where the morning session will focus on renewable energy. That is a great opportunity for developers and others to explain technological ideas. The next opportunity is to potentially create a technology conference that BOEM could host, and tech companies could present more information. Lastly, there may be an opportunity to help BOEM prepare FAQs on this topic to place on BOEM's website.
- *Question/Comment: My organization is focused on technology and supporting oil and gas activities transitioning to renewables, including utilizing existing infrastructure. Can we arrange discussions with BOEM on the potential to engage and incorporate our work?*
  - *Response:* The upcoming Gulf of Mexico conference might be the right place to explore this further. BOEM can work towards a type of technology-specific forum where companies can come forward and talk about the issues and help define the problem statements. For example, hurricanes, wind speeds, and standards are technical issues that could be addressed. Sessions could be dedicated specifically to these issues, and then when people have questions, they can ask the experts.
- *Question: The Offshore Operators Committee (OOC) Renewables Subcommittee has planned to conduct a second offshore wind workshop in Q3 2022. Would BOEM GOM Region be able to participate in this technically focused workshop to provide feedback on the subcommittee's efforts on the safety and environmental fronts?*
  - *Response:* Yes, let BOEM know the date. We would like to be there.

G. Overview of Action Items and Closing Remarks

Eric Poncelet noted that if Task Force Members have any additional comments or concerns on the proposed Call Area and/or the environmental review process, they should send an email to Idrissa Boube at Idrissa.Boube@boem.gov. Mr. 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 also be posted to the Gulf of Mexico Task Force webpage. For the participants that requested shapefiles, BOEM will reach out directly to share additional details.

Regional Director Mike Celata offered closing remarks to formally adjourn the Task Force Meeting. He thanked everyone for joining and appreciated the feedback. Mr. Celata looks forward to continued dialogue and noted that BOEM will consider all the comments as they move forward in the process. BOEM is willing to meet with stakeholders as they move toward next year's lease sale, ensuring that collaboration is prioritized throughout the process.

III. Appendices

A. Agenda

Gulf of Mexico Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force Meeting
February 2, 2022
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM CT

Webinar Information (Zoom)
URL: https://kearnswest.zoom.us/s/87451167856?pwd=Qy9yZEpKa0V0Yjh0SWI2dUdoOWdRUT09
Webinar ID: 874 5116 7856
Passcode: 885669

**Registration is required for members of the public to attend the Task Force meeting.*
Register here: https://kearnswest.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Otecv7LjQ7uc7JxFSdpCuA

Meeting Purpose and Objectives

- Overall purpose: 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.
- Provide an update on the leasing process in the Gulf of Mexico region, including comments received on the Call for Information (Call), and seek in-depth feedback from Task Force members to inform BOEM's selection of Wind Energy Areas (WEAs).
- Provide opportunities for public input on the topics being considered by the Task Force.

Time (CT)	Item	
8:45 a.m.	***Join the Webinar*** • Opportunity for Task Force members and the public to log into the virtual platform and get technical support as needed	
9:00 a.m.	**Welcome & Opening Remarks**	• Mike Celata, Regional Director, BOEM Gulf of Mexico Region • Tribal Invocation
9:10 a.m.	**Task Force Meeting Overview** • Webinar instructions & guidance • Task Force introductions • Agenda review	• Eric Poncelet, Facilitator, Kearns & West
9:20 a.m.	**Update on Outer Continental Shelf Wind Energy Leasing in the Gulf of Mexico – Call for Information and Wind Energy Areas** • Summary of comments received on Call for Information • Opportunity for Task Force clarifying questions	• BOEM Renewable Energy Overview & Leasing Process Review – Tershara Matthews, BOEM • Environmental Review Process – Michelle Nannen, BOEM • Marine Spatial Analyses to Inform Wind Energy Siting in the Gulf of Mexico – James Morris, NOAA

Public Meeting Pauses Task Force Members transition to a Task Force Member-only breakout session. Members of the public are on break until 11:25 a.m. CT.		
10:10 a.m.	***Break***	
10:25 a.m.	***Task Force Member-ONLY Session*** • Task Force member breakout sessions	• Federal agency members • State agency members • Local government members • Tribal government members
11:15 a.m.	***Break***	
Public Meeting Resumes Task Force Members return to the public meeting. Members of the public may rejoin the public meeting.		
11:25 a.m.	**Report Out from Breakout Sessions and Task Force Discussion**	• All Task Force Members • Eric Poncelet, Facilitator, K&W
12:00 p.m.	**Public Input Opportunity and Discussion** • Opportunity for public input on topics under Task Force discussion	
12:55 p.m.	**Overview of Action Items and Closing Remarks**	• Eric Poncelet, Facilitator, K&W • Mike Celata, Regional Director, BOEM Gulf of Mexico Office
1:00 p.m.	***Adjourn***	

B. Task Force Member Participant List

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

Gulf of Mexico Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force Roster*

**Task Force Roster as of January 31, 2022. Task Force members are noted alphabetically by organization or agency.*

U.S. Elected Officials & Representatives

1. James Quinn – U.S. Senate, Office of Senator Bill Cassidy
2. David Stokes – U.S. Senate, Office of Senator John Kennedy
3. Kathee Facchiano – U.S. House of Representatives, Office of Congressman Clay Higgins (LA-03)
4. Megan Miller – U.S. House of Representatives, Office of Congressman Steve Scalise (LA-01)
5. Paul Sawyer – U.S. House of Representatives, Office of Congressman Garret Graves (LA-06)

Tribal Governments

1. Melissa Darden – Chitimatcha Tribe of Louisiana
2. Dakota John – Coushatta Tribe
3. Johnna Fisher – Jena Band of Choctaw Indians

State of Alabama

1. Chris Blankenship - Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR)
2. Patti McCurdy - ADCNR
3. Scott Brown – Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM)
4. Lance LeFleur – ADEM
5. Sarila Mickle – ADEM

State of Louisiana

1. Brian Abshire – Calcasieu Parish
2. Scott Trahan – Cameron Parish
3. Clair Marceaux – Cameron Parish Port
4. Camille Manning-Broome – Center for Planning Excellence
5. Jonathan Rhodes – City of New Orleans
6. Bren Haas – Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority
7. Chett Chasson – Greater Lafourche Port (Port Fourchon)
8. Colette Pichon Battle – Gulf Coast Center for Law & Policy
9. Michelle Gonzales – Jefferson Parish
10. Cynthia Lee Sheng – Jefferson Parish
11. Archie Chaisson – Lafourche Parish
12. Brad Lambert – Louisiana Economic Development (LED)
13. Don Pierson – LED
14. Joseph Breaux – Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry
15. Chuck Brown – Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
16. Lourdes Iturralde – DEQ
17. Thomas Harris – Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
18. Mark Hogan – DNR

19. Sara Krupa – DNR
20. Jason Lanclos – DNR
21. Keith Lovell – DNR
22. Charles Reulet – DNR
23. Eric Kalivoda – Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development
24. Jack Montoucet – Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
25. Mark Moses – Louisiana Division of Administration, Office of Facility Planning and Control
26. Patrick Banks – Louisiana Division of Administration, Office of Fisheries
27. Cheston Hill – Louisiana Division of Administration, Office of State Lands
28. Harry Vorhoff – Louisiana Governor's Office of Coastal Activities
29. Pat Arnould – Louisiana Governor's Office of Indian Affairs
30. Sam Jones – Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinator's Office
31. Craig Greene – Louisiana Public Service Commission
32. Brandon Frey – Louisiana Public Service Commission
33. Page Cortez – Louisiana State Legislature
34. Patrick McMath – Louisiana State Legislature
35. Joe Orgeron – Louisiana State Legislature
36. Clay Schexnayder – Louisiana State Legislature
37. Helena Moreno – New Orleans City Council
38. Nicole Hobson-Morris – Office of Cultural Development, Division of Historic Preservation
39. Kirk Lepine – Plaquemines Parish
40. Richert Self – Port of Lake Charles
41. Brandy Christina – Port of New Orleans
42. Guy McInnis – St. Bernard Parish
43. David Hanagriff – St. Mary Parish
44. Gordon Dove – Terrebone Parish
45. Terrence Chambers – University of Louisiana at Lafayette
46. Dane Hebert – Vermilion Parish

State of Mississippi

1. Tim Aultman – Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)
2. Lynn Chambers – MDEQ
3. Mike Freiman – MDEQ
4. Chad LaFontaine – MDEQ
5. Krystal Rudolph – MDEQ
6. Chris Sanders – MDEQ
7. Mark Williams – MDEQ
8. Willa Brantley – Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR)
9. Joe Spraggins – MDMR
10. Jamie Miller – Mississippi Development Agency
11. Mike Hainsey – Mississippi Military Communities Council
12. Mike Johnson – Mississippi Military Communities Council
13. Jim Craig – Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH)
14. Les Herrington – MSDH
15. Bill Moody – MSDH
16. Anne Hall Brashier - Office of Mississippi Governor Tate Reeves
17. Kristen Windham – Office of Mississippi Governor Tate Reeves

State of Texas

1. Jacquelyn Boutwell – Texas General Land Office (TXGLO)
2. David Green – TXGLO
3. Robert Hatter – TXGLO
4. Mark Havens – TXGLO
5. Alan McWilliams – TXGLO
6. Emma Clarkson – Texas Parks and Wildlife
7. Robin Riechers – Texas Parks and Wildlife
8. Laura Zebehazy – Texas Parks and Wildlife

Federal Agencies

1. Christopher Daniel – Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP)
2. Blythe Semmer – ACHP
3. David Saunders – Bureau of Indian Affairs
4. Cheri Hunter – Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE)
5. Michael Lignowski – Department of Defense (DOD)
6. Steven Sample – DOD
7. Nate McKenzie – Department of Energy (DOE)
8. Walter Musial – DOE
9. Maya Whalen-Kipp – DOE
10. Shaikh Taimur – Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
11. Cindy Whitten – Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
12. Timothy Bialecki – Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)
13. Robert Fares – FERC
14. Tabitha Elkington – Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council (FPISC) Agencies
15. Vicki Cornish – Marine Mammal Commission
16. Scott Kiernan - Military Aviation & Installation Assurance Siting Clearinghouse
17. Nida Holliday – National Park Service (NPS)
18. Dusty Pate – NPS
19. Sarah Quinn – NPS
20. David Kaiser – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
21. Kerry Kehoe – NOAA
22. Candace Nachman – NOAA
23. Kristin Ransom – NOAA
24. Heidi Stiller – NOAA
25. John Walter – NOAA
26. David Dale – National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
27. Noah Silverman – NMFS
28. Susan Gibson – U.S. Army Corps (USACE)
29. Susan Mabry – USACE, Galveston District
30. Katherine Taylor – USACE, Galveston District
31. Dave Soileau –USACE, New Orleans District
32. David Blalock – U.S. Army Regional Environmental and Energy Office (REEO)
33. Stanley Rasmussen – U.S. Army REEO
34. George Detweiler – U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)
35. Maureen Kallgren – USCG
36. Shawn Danoff – U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT)
37. Brian Hill - USDOT
38. Chuck Ardizzone – U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
39. Dawn Gardiner – USFWS

40. Marty Tuegel – USFWS
41. Christine Willis – USFWS
42. Gregory Steyer – U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)
43. David Diamond – U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)
44. Seton Parsons – U.S. Small Business Administration (USSBA)
45. Tyler Richards – USSBA
46. Prianka Sharma – USSBA