

GULF OF MAINE INTERGOVERNMENTAL RENEWABLE ENERGY TASK FORCE MAY 19, 2022 – MEETING SUMMARY

DISCLAIMER: This meeting summary was prepared by the Consensus Building Institute (CBI), a non-profit entity contracted by BOEM to facilitate Task Force discussions. This summary is not intended to be a meeting transcript. Rather, it focuses on the main points covered during the meeting.

Meeting In Brief

This meeting of the Gulf of Maine Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force was convened to facilitate coordination, consultation, and information sharing among federal, state, local, and Tribal governments regarding the renewable energy leasing process on the Outer Continental Shelf in the Gulf of Maine. Individual states and various federal agencies provided updates and their perspectives on offshore wind energy and the renewable energy leasing process. The meeting sought feedback on the next step in the commercial leasing process, a Request for Interest (RFI), as well as planned stakeholder and tribal engagement. In additional, the meeting discussed Maine's research lease application, which will generate a Request for Competitive Interest (RFCI) shortly. Task Force members asked questions and engaged in discussion in small groups and in the plenary meeting. The meeting included two public input sessions.

ACTION ITEMS

Who	What
BOEM	Post all presentation slides, meeting summary, and meeting recording.
	Proceed with the RFI, RFCI, and engagement plan.
Task Force	Review RFI and RFCI materials once posted and encourage participation in public
members	comment periods.

ATTENDANCE

106 Task Force members attended the meeting. In addition, 454 non-Task Force attendees were present, including government representatives who did not identify as Task Force members, representatives from the fishing industry, interested citizens, environmental non-governmental organizations, and the private sector.

DISCUSSION

Below is a summary of key themes and topics discussed during the meeting. Presentations and recordings of Task Force sessions are available on the <u>BOEM website</u>.

Welcome and Opening Remarks

The meeting opened with a welcome and introductory remarks from Jim Bennett, Chief of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) Office of Renewable Energy Program (OREP), and BOEM Director Amanda Lefton. Director Lefton thanked Task Force members and the public for their participation, shared BOEM's outlook for commercial leasing processes in the coming years and emphasized that businesses, tribes, states, and stakeholders should work together to guide this development.

Outer Continental Shelf Wind Energy Leasing in the Gulf of Maine

BOEM Project Coordinator Zachary Jylkka reviewed the multi-step process for commercial leasing in the Gulf of Maine that will winnow down the planning area to potential lease areas through rounds of engagement, public comment, and analysis. Jylkka also described the immediate next step, a Request for Interest (RFI). In addition, BOEM is processing Maine's application for a research lease, which requires BOEM to issue a Request for Competitive Interest (RFCI). The research array leasing process is separate from the commercial leasing process.

Comments and questions from Task Force members during this section included:

- Requests for clarification between the research lease and the commercial lease processes
- Questions about how New Hampshire and Massachusetts can provide input on Maine's research lease application, and what qualifies something as a research lease
- A question about whether cable routes and impacts are considered during the winnowing process to identify wind energy lease areas



 A question about when federal agencies will be briefed on the fisheries mitigation and compensation guidance approach BOEM is preparing (separate from the Gulf of Maine leasing process)

State Perspectives

Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts explained their unique actions and priorities around offshore wind in the Gulf of Maine. States spoke about their renewable energy goals, infrastructure to support offshore wind, and the importance of identifying data gaps. Each state spoke about offshore wind in the context of transitioning to renewable energy, and the importance of stakeholder engagement throughout the planning and leasing process.

Federal Trust Resources and Responsibilities in the Gulf of Maine

Representatives from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Defense, and the United States Coast Guard individually discussed their responsibilities, activities, perspectives, and available information/data gaps relevant to the Gulf of Maine planning and leasing process.

RFI Development Framework for the Gulf of Maine

BOEM's Zachary Jylkka explained how the agency is preparing the Request for Interest (RFI) for commercial leasing in the Gulf of Maine using an RFI Development Framework. This Task Force meeting was an opportunity to provide input on this framework, Jylkka said. The RFI will be the first step in the winnowing process. After asking some initial clarifying questions, Task Force members split into smaller group to discuss: 1) is the proposed RFI asking for the right information, 2) what would make engagement around these issues particularly meaningful, 3) are there aspects that need greater clarification and 4) any other comments. In the small groups and later in plenary, several themes emerged, including:

- The distinction between the research lease process and commercial leasing process continues to be confusing for some people. Other Task Force members questioned how the research array will inform commercial leasing, if the two processes are happening at the same time.
- Task Force members recommended additional information requests be added to the RFI, including
 data on how climate change is altering the Gulf, impacts on the way scientific research is conducted in
 the gulf, cumulative effects on fisheries and habitats, and how offshore wind might impact a new rocketlaunching industry emerging in Maine.
- The importance of engaging with Tribes and stakeholders

Stakeholder Engagement During the BOEM Process

Representatives from each state and BOEM participated in this panel session. BOEM began by sharing an engagement graphic depicting BOEM's proposed engagement strategy from the RFI to Wind Energy Area Designation. States also described how their respective engagement approaches would supplement and support BOEM's planning and leasing process. BOEM emphasized its commitment to starting early to deconflict as much as possible before the leasing stage. Comments from Task Force members included concerns on how to equitably engage communities in the process.

PUBLIC INPUT

People attending the meeting who weren't Task Force members had two opportunities to provide input. Common themes included:

- Concerns BOEM is moving too fast, given how complicated the Gulf of Maine is and what's at stake
- Encouragement for BOEM to move forward responsibly, and to consider the costs of not acting
- Requests for a Programmatic Environment Impact Statement prior to identifying lease areas
- Engage early and often
 - Concern too few fishermen are involved and providing input
 - Opportunities to work with communities around workforce training
 - Use existing outreach forums
- When thinking of conflicted areas, consider how conditions may change in the Gulf of Maine in the coming years



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