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## **MMS and New Jersey Hold Offshore Renewable Energy Task Force Meeting**

**TRENTON, NJ** – Today the Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) held its first meeting with officials from New Jersey to discuss renewable energy development on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). The MMS is establishing inter-governmental task forces to consult with states concerning renewable energy leasing and development on the OCS.

Governor Corzine designated Ken Esser, his Chief Energy Policy Advisor, to work with the MMS to establish the New Jersey task force. The task force includes state government officials, officials from affected federal agencies, elected local government officials, and tribal leaders. MMS is working with the task force to facilitate the commercial leasing process for OCS renewable energy development offshore New Jersey.

"The MMS New Jersey task force will work to ensure that future renewable energy projects off the coast of New Jersey are efficiently and effectively reviewed to support the Administration's goal of broadening the energy resource portfolio for the nation," said MMS Deputy Director Walter Cruickshank. "MMS looks forward to working collaboratively with the task force as we begin planning for safe and environmentally responsible renewable energy development activities on the Outer Continental Shelf offshore New Jersey."

"New Jersey's Outer Continental Shelf is a prime resource for environmentally-friendly energy alternatives such as wind power," said Governor Jon S. Corzine. "The development of these renewable and energy efficient options is paramount to building a responsible energy future for New Jersey and our nation. Through the efforts of the Obama Administration, we are now on the path to achieve an affordable, reliable energy supply that will serve our citizens for generations."

During the first MMS New Jersey task force meeting, the task force charter was presented and discussed. MMS officials explained the commercial leasing process for OCS renewable energy and discussed options for starting the process off New Jersey. The task force participants discussed specific actions and timelines required by MMS and the state to support New Jersey's goal of developing offshore renewable energy.

In April 2009, President Barack Obama announced that the MMS finalized the framework for renewable energy development on the OCS. This framework establishes the process for granting leases, easements, and rights-of-way for offshore renewable energy development activities, such as the siting and construction of wind generation facilities on the OCS. The framework also provides for MMS to use task forces in carrying out its responsibilities for authorizing OCS renewable energy activities in partnership with state, local, and tribal governments, and Federal agencies. MMS recently held task force meetings with Delaware, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts. A task force is also being formed for Virginia.

**Media Contact:**

[MMS Public Affairs Gulf](#) 504-736-2595

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