

FOR RELEASE:
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Office of Public Affairs

BOEMRE Initiates Leasing Process for Commercial Wind Development Offshore Massachusetts

WASHINGTON – The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE), in partnership with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, today announced it is publishing a Request for Interest (RFI) to gauge interest in future wind energy development offshore Massachusetts.

This is the first step under the “Smart from the Start” OCS renewable energy initiative recently announced by Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar (<http://www.doi.gov/news/pressreleases/Salazar-Launches-Smart-from-the-Start-Initiative-to-Speed-Offshore-Wind-Energy-Development-off-the-Atlantic-Coast.cfm>). It allows BOEMRE to identify priority Wind Energy Areas for potential development. Wind Energy Areas are offshore locations that appear most suitable for wind energy development. Data collected for these high priority areas will inform government and industry assessments and planning, and will promote greater efficiency in the siting and permitting process for offshore wind projects.

“BOEMRE has worked closely with Massachusetts officials and tribal representatives to facilitate the commercial leasing process for renewable energy development off the southern coast of Massachusetts,” said BOEMRE Director Michael R. Bromwich. “The Administration has expressed its commitment to putting our nation on the path to a renewable energy future, and BOEMRE will continue working to fashion an expedited but responsible process for leasing and permitting on the OCS.”

“The Request for Interest issued by the Obama administration today begins a process that will lead to up to 4,000 megawatts of wind energy installed far off our shores – enough electricity to power approximately 1.7 million households, and enough to take this new US industry from infancy to maturity,” Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Ian Bowles said. “Let there be no question that Massachusetts is, and will be, the nation’s offshore wind leader – spurring innovation, reducing costs, and creating jobs.”

BOEMRE will use industry responses to gauge specific interest in the commercial development of wind resources off the Commonwealth’s shores. If responses indicate that there is no competitive interest in this area, the agency may proceed with a noncompetitive lease process. Whether the leasing process is competitive or noncompetitive, it will include public participation as well as a thorough environmental review conforming to all applicable laws.

The Massachusetts RFI area was selected through consultation with the Massachusetts Renewable Energy Task Force, an intergovernmental coordination group led by BOEMRE. Task Force members include federal and state agencies, tribal governments, and local entities that have a role in permitting, reviewing or regulating resources or activities that are involved in energy development on the OCS.

The RFI area off the coast of Massachusetts is approximately 12 nautical miles (nm) south of Martha’s Vineyard and Nantucket, and extends approximately 31 nm seaward, south to the 60 meter depth contour, then east approximately 65 nm, then north approximately 31 nm. The area is approximately 2,224 square nm and contains 321 whole OCS lease blocks as well as 163 partial blocks. A map of the area of interest as well as the electronic copy of the RFI can be found at: <http://www.boemre.gov/offshore/RenewableEnergy/StateActivities.htm#Massachusetts>.

BOEMRE invites all interested and affected parties to comment and provide information about the Massachusetts RFI that will be useful in considering the area of interest for commercial wind energy leases, including information on environmental issues and concerns. The notice is available for public inspection today through the Federal Register’s website at: <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/public-inspection/index.html>. The public may submit comments no later than February 28, 2011 in one of the following ways:

- **Electronically:** <http://www.regulations.gov>. In the entry titled “Enter Keyword or ID,” enter BOEM–2010–0063, then click search. Follow the instructions to submit public comments and view supporting and related materials available for this request for information. BOEMRE will post all comments.
- By mail, send your expressions of interest, comments and information to the following address: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement, Office of Offshore Alternative Energy Programs, 381 Elden Street, Mail Stop 4090, Herndon, VA 20170.

Contact: [BOEMRE Public Affairs](#)