

## **Questions and Answers**

### **BOEM's Path Forward in the Gulf of Mexico**

#### **What is the Administration's commitment to offshore wind?**

- To underscore his commitment to renewable energy, fight climate change and create good paying jobs, President Biden issued Executive Order 14008 that called for the Interior Department to identify steps to increase responsible renewable energy development on public lands and offshore waters.
- In support of the Biden-Harris Administration's goal to combat climate change and create good paying jobs, the Departments of Interior, Energy, and Commerce committed to a target of 30 gigawatts of offshore wind energy by 2030, which would create nearly 80,000 jobs.
- To help the Administration meet the 2030 target, the Department plans on advancing new lease sales and completing the review of at least 16 Construction and Operations Plans (COPs) by 2025. This represents more than 19 GW of new clean energy for the nation.
- The 800 megawatt Vineyard Wind energy project is the first commercial-scale offshore wind project in the Federal waters and represents progress towards the Biden-Harris Administration goal of 30GW of offshore wind by 2030, while creating good-paying jobs in the process.

#### **What is the Gulf of Mexico Intergovernmental Task Force?**

The Task Force will bring together federal agencies, Tribal governments, and state and local agencies to facilitate coordination and consultation related to renewable energy planning activities on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) in the Gulf of Mexico and provide updates on regional offshore wind goals.

- Facilitate coordination among federal, state, local, and Tribal governments regarding the wind energy leasing process on the OCS in the Gulf of Mexico.
- Share information about existing Gulf of Mexico activities and marine conditions.
- Provide updates on regional offshore wind goals.

#### **Do you foresee offshore wind development in the Gulf of Mexico?**

- The Gulf of Mexico is well positioned to transition to a renewable energy future.
  - The infrastructure exists to support offshore wind in the Gulf of Mexico.

- The oil and gas industry will most likely lead the way with many of the majors announcing plans to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050.
- Approximately 29 million acres in the Gulf of Mexico is being considered for renewable energy development, with Texas and Louisiana having some of the highest wind capacity in the U.S.
- The Gulf Coast States combined comprise 32% of the shallow-water offshore wind potential in the U.S.

### **What is the administration doing to make sure offshore wind development creates jobs?**

- The Biden Administration is committed to creating good-paying jobs. Offshore wind has the potential to create up to 80,000 jobs by 2030.
- A core component of a successful offshore wind program is to provide certainty to industry and develop a strong domestic supply chain here in the United States.
- We are excited to see the offshore wind industry taking the first steps:
  - Dominion Energy is in the process of developing the first Jones Act compliant offshore wind turbine installation vessel in Brownsville, TX. This is a \$500 million investment that supports 700 construction jobs.
  - The vessel's hull and infrastructure will require 14,000 tons of domestic steel, with nearly 10,000 tons sourced from Alabama and West Virginia suppliers.
  - The vessel is expected to be available to support U.S. offshore wind turbine installations by the end of 2023.
- These new jobs will cover a wide range of sectors, including manufacturing, installation, operations and maintenance and support services.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES**

- BOEM invests around \$30 million a year in environmental studies to understand the potential effects of offshore energy and minerals leasing and development on the human and natural environment based on the feedback we get from stakeholders – including fishermen.

Since 2009, BOEM has awarded over \$12 million for 22 fisheries-related studies on the Atlantic. Studies have ranged from baseline characterization of fish movement and habitat in leased areas to studies of specific stressors such as sound and electromagnetic fields (EMF).

- BOEM funded a 2-year study with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory to support and inform strategic planning for offshore renewable energy in the Gulf of Mexico.
- The study evaluated both the technical and economic feasibility of offshore wind, wave, tidal, ocean currents, solar, thermal gradients, and deep water source cooling.
- By 2030, NREL estimated offshore wind in the Gulf of Mexico would range below \$70 per megawatt hour to \$170 per megawatt hour.
- Comparing that nationally at \$60 per megawatt hour to \$190 per megawatt hour
- The cost estimates used in the model by NREL for our study have been updated and if we re-ran the model today, NREL has noted the cost ranges may even be lower for the Gulf of Mexico.
- An analysis of jobs, earnings, regional gross domestic product (GDP), and regional economic output to support the construction and operation of a single 600-MW offshore wind project in the Gulf of Mexico was also analyzed.
- The results indicate that a single offshore wind project could support approximately 4,470 jobs and \$445 million in GDP during construction and an ongoing 150 jobs and \$14 million annually.

### **How does BOEM plan to engage with the fishing industry, and can their concerns be resolved?**

- Undoubtedly, the fishing industry is an important stakeholder and is legitimately concerned about potential impacts from offshore wind development. BOEM is committed to continuing to work with all stakeholders, including the fishing community. Their input will be carefully considered during planning decisions.
- We will continue to use the best available fishing data and science to inform the renewable energy leasing process.
- BOEM invests in environmental studies to understand the potential effects of leasing on the human and natural environment based on the feedback we get from stakeholders – including the fishing industry.
- These include studies on benthic habitats, protected species, and fishing socio-economic impacts.

BOEM supports the ocean data portals of the regional ocean partnerships and has developed an OCS Ocean Reporting Tool along with NOAA to facilitate information sharing.

### **What do you see as BOEM's role regarding transmission?**

- Transmission is going to be an important topic moving forward as the offshore wind industry develops here in the United States.
- BOEM is committed to facilitating intergovernmental and external conversations surrounding transmission.

### **ENERGY TRANSITION**

- The **Gulf of Mexico**'s oil and gas industry has the ability and experience to play an integral role in the Nation's offshore renewable energy industry.
- In fact, the oil and gas industry played a key role in supporting the fabrication of the nation's first offshore project. The steel jacket foundations for the Block Island Wind Farm, offshore Rhode Island, were fabricated at Gulf Island Fabrication, Inc., which began fabrication work of offshore oil and gas infrastructure in late 2014 at its facilities in Houma, LA.
- The Gulf's experience with global marine shipbuilding is also playing a key role in the domestic manufacturing supply chain.
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