

## Environmental Studies Program: Studies Development Plan | FY 2024–2025

Field	Study Information
Title	Alaska Coastal Marine Institute
Administered by	Alaska Regional Office
BOEM Contact(s)	Eric J. Taylor ( <a href="mailto:eric.taylor@boem.gov">eric.taylor@boem.gov</a> )
Procurement Type(s)	Cooperative Agreement
Performance Period	FY 2024–2028
Final Report Due	TBD
Date Revised	May 16, 2023
Problem	The BOEM Environmental Studies Program needs applied scientific studies to provide information for making responsible decisions for managing energy and marine mineral resources on the Alaska Outer Continental Shelf (OCS).
Intervention	Research faculty at the University of Alaska provide scientific information to inform leasing, exploration, and development decisions in the Alaska OCS.
Comparison	Through the Alaska Coastal Marine Institute (CMI), BOEM will obtain scientific research to address multiple stakeholder interests including the state of Alaska, Department of Interior, industry, conservation organizations and the public.
Outcome	University of Alaska research faculty with expertise in physical oceanography, wildlife and fisheries ecology, air quality, human dimensions and social science, climate, and other disciplines are available to design, collect and disseminate environmental information needed for OCS energy and marine mineral decisions; address local and regional OCS-related environmental and resource issues of mutual interest; and strengthen the BOEM-State partnership.
Context	All Alaska OCS Planning Areas.

**BOEM Information Need(s):** This cooperative agreement supports improved leasing decisions and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analyses pertinent to potential energy and marine mineral actions on the Alaska outer continental shelf (OCS). Final reports will be available for lease sales and post-sale decisions; interim data products and inputs will be used to address information needs. Topical areas to be addressed under the Coastal Marine Institute (CMI) have been identified through the Alaska Annual Studies Planning process and a set of identified Framework Issues. The CMI, which operates on a five-year funding cycle, also will develop information and public products for various audiences that address public concerns raised during outreach efforts.

**Background:** The CMI is cooperative program between BOEM and the University of Alaska, with State of Alaska participation, began in 1993 with the goals of updating and expanding our understanding of OCS environmental information and addressing future needs related to the offshore energy and marine program in Alaska. Scientific research is guided by framework issues related to potential future lease sales and other energy related actions in the Alaska OCS Region. CMI project awards require a 1:1 cost share.

**Objectives:** The Framework Issues which guide the CMI are:

- Scientific studies for better understanding marine, coastal, or human environments affected or potentially affected by offshore energy and mineral exploration and extraction on the OCS.
- Modeling studies of environmental, social, economic, or cultural processes related to OCS energy and marine mineral activities in order to improve scientific predictive capabilities.
- Experimental studies for better understanding of environmental processes, or the causes and effects of OCS activities.
- Projects which design or establish mechanisms or protocols for sharing data or scientific information regarding marine or coastal resources or human activities in order to support prudent management of conventional energy resources and potential development of renewable energy and marine mineral resources on the OCS offshore the State of Alaska.
- Synthesis studies of scientific environmental or socioeconomic background information relevant to the OCS program.

**Methods:** A proposal process is initiated each year with a request for letters of intent to address one or more of the Framework Issues from university researchers and other scientific researchers in State agencies. The letters of intent are reviewed by BOEM scientists and a Technical Steering Committee (TSC), made up of scientific representatives of the cooperators, to identify which submissions merit submission of a full-length proposal. BOEM scientists and the TSC then evaluate the proposals' research concepts, methodology, and cost effectiveness to inform funding decisions. External peer reviews may be requested for new projects. Each CMI project produces a final report that is publicly disseminated through the BOEM website. Principal investigators also give presentations at a scheduled annual CMI Science Review, scientific conferences, and various public meetings.

The structure of the CMI not only promotes extensive input from BOEM's academic partners in Alaska, but it allows for a great deal of flexibility to rapidly address priority information needs as they arise. Furthermore, the requirement for matching funds at a one-to-one level facilitates extensive leveraging and partnership arrangements for the projects.

**Specific Research Question(s):** N/A

**Current Status:** N/A

**Publications Completed:** N/A

**Affiliated WWW Sites:** <https://uaf.edu/cfos/research/cmi/index.php>

**References:** None