United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT
New Orleans Office
1201 Elmwood Park Blvd
New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394

22 November 2021

[Tribal Address]

Dear [Tribal Leader]:

I am writing to provide notification of advancement of the offshore wind energy leasing process in the Gulf of Mexico, and to invite the [Tribe] to engage in government-to-government consultation with the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) as the Tribal government deems appropriate.

Background

In June 2021, BOEM issued a Request for Interest (RFI) to gauge specific interest in obtaining commercial wind leases in an area on the Gulf of Mexico OCS. Based on the responses received to the RFI, BOEM has determined that competitive interest exists.

On November 1, 2021, BOEM published a *Call for Information and Nominations – Commercial Leasing for Wind Power Development on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Offshore Gulf of Mexico* (Call) to request information from the public and determine industry interest in commercial offshore wind energy development for an area in the Gulf of Mexico. This "Call Area" consists of almost 30 million acres located just west of the Mississippi River to the Texas/ Mexico border. It is bounded on the south by water depths up to 400-meters (see map in Enclosure 1).

The publication of this Call initiates the competitive leasing process for the Call Area but does not mean that BOEM will ultimately grant a lease to any particular party. Rather, the publication of this Call indicates that the Call Area may be subject to future leasing. BOEM is using this notice both to solicit any lease nominations beyond those identified in response to the earlier RFI and to request comments from interested and affected parties regarding site conditions, resources, and uses of the identified area that would be relevant to BOEM's potential leasing and development authorization process. This information could also be used in the development of an environmental assessment for site assessment and characterization activities for a renewable energy auction. After reviewing the information received in response to this Call, BOEM may

combine all or portions of the Call Area into one or more Wind Energy Areas that would be subject to environmental analysis and consideration for leasing.

BOEM's publishing of the Call in the Federal Register on November 1, 2021, has initiated a 45-day public comment period. Information and materials related to the Gulf of Mexico OCS Call can be found at: www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/state-activities/gulf-mexico-activities.

In the coming weeks, BOEM will also be initiating a 30-day scoping period in preparation for developing an Environmental Assessment (EA) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This EA will analyze the effects of site assessment and characterization activities that could occur from a proposed Renewable Energy lease auction of potential Wind Energy Areas within the Call Area. The EA will only analyze site assessment activities, such as deploying a meteorological buoy or vessels traversing an area. Impacts associated with constructing a renewable energy project, such as a wind energy project, will be analyzed in a separate document, should plans to do so be submitted to BOEM. BOEM is interested in receiving input from Tribes regarding reasonable alternatives for consideration in the EA; the identification of historic properties and/or potential effects on historic properties from site assessment and characterization activities associated with the proposed Renewable Energy lease auction; and your input on potential measures to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate impacts to environmental and cultural resources to be analyzed in the EA.

Finally, BOEM is planning to convene its second Gulf of Mexico Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force (Task Force) meeting on January 26, 2022. BOEM invites your participation in the Task Force, which was established to facilitate coordination and consultation between federal, state, local, and tribal governments, and to inform offshore renewable energy leasing decisions in the Gulf of Mexico. The Task Force Charter, a summary of the first meeting on June 15, 2021, and other related reference material can also be found at: https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/state-activities/gulf-mexico-gom-intergovernmental-renewable-energy-task-force.

Purpose of Letter

BOEM recognizes the unique legal relationship between the United States and the Tribe as set forth in the Constitution of the United States, treaties, statutes, Executive Orders, and court decisions. In recognition of this special relationship, the purpose of this letter is to learn more about your Tribe's interest to engage in dialogue through a joint or individual government-to-government consultation. The consultation would focus on the following topics: the Gulf of Mexico Call Area, development of the lease auction EA, participation in the Task Force, potential next steps in the BOEM leasing process, and implications for the Tribe.

BOEM is sending this invitation for a meeting to the following federally recognized Tribes with historical and/or cultural ties to the region:

- Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas
- Caddo Nation of Oklahoma
- Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana
- Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana
- Jena Band of Choctaw Indians

- Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians
- Muscogee (Creek) Nation
- Poarch Band of Creek Indians
- Seminole Nation of Oklahoma
- Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
- Tunica Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana

Request for Response

We kindly request that you respond within 30 days of receiving this letter with the following information:

- Please share your interest to participate in a joint government-to-government consultation meeting with BOEM and other Tribes listed above with current and ancestral ties to the Gulf of Mexico.
- Please share your interest to participate in an individual government-to-government consultation meeting with BOEM only.
- If interested to consult, please indicate your availability in the month of January 2022 for a two to three-hour morning or afternoon virtual meeting. We will use this information to schedule a meeting date/time that is convenient for all participants.

Please transmit your response to the BOEM Gulf of Mexico Region Tribal Liaison, Mr. Doug Jones, at the contact information listed below:

Mr. Doug Jones
Department of the Interior
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
1201 Elmwood Park Blvd. GM 673E
New Orleans, LA 70123
douglas.jones@boem.gov
(504) 736-2859

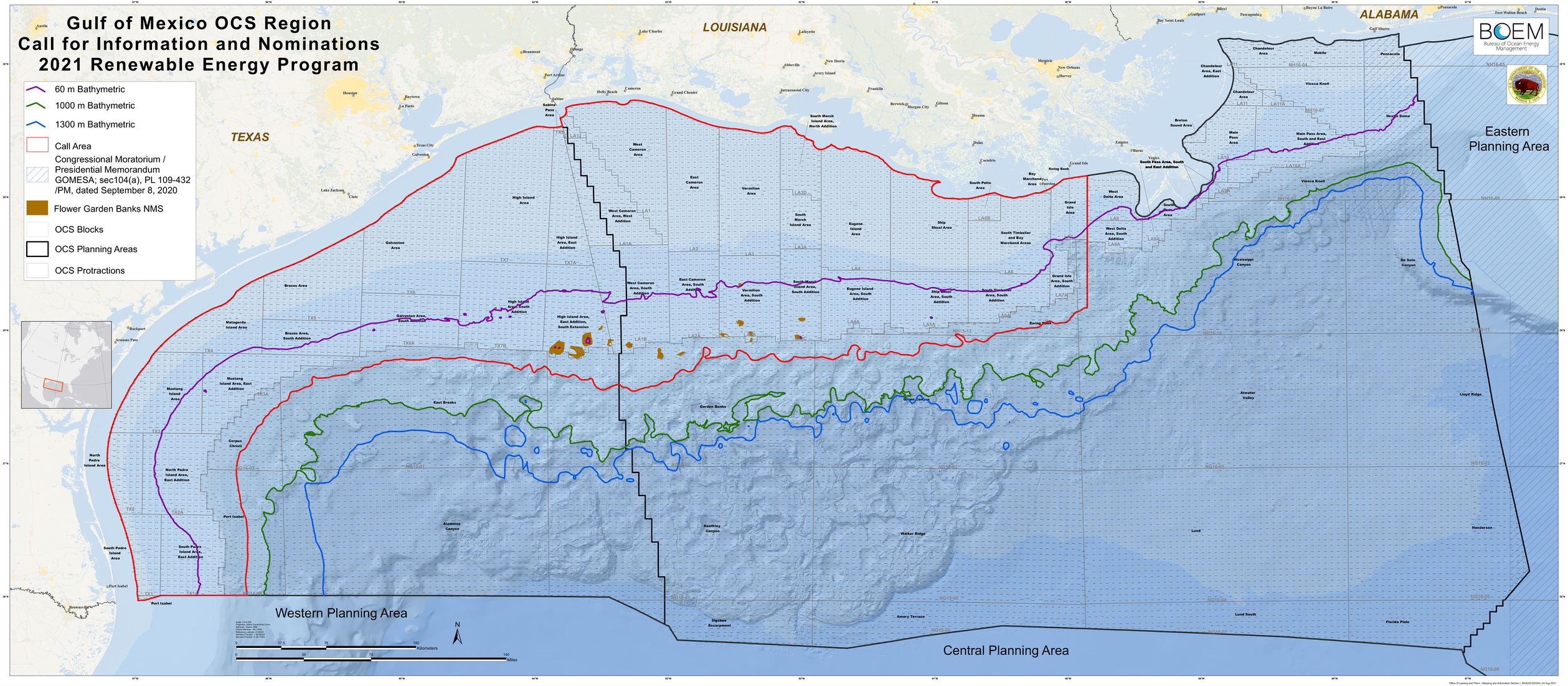
Sincerely,

Arie Kaller

Arie Kaller
Acting Regional Director

Enclosures:
Gulf of Mexico Call Area Map

Gulf of Mexico OCS Region
Call for Information and Nominations
2021 Renewable Energy Program



Office of Leasing and Plans - Mapping and Automation Section | MAS2021050300 | 24 Aug 2021