New York Environmental Assessment

Commercial Wind Lease Issuance and Site Assessment Activities

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Office of Renewable Energy Programs
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
New York Environmental Assessment

- Notice of Availability published on June 6, 2016 (Docket No. BOEM-2016-0038)
- 30-day public comment period (ending July 6, 2016)
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

NEPA is a procedural law that requires Federal agencies to assess the environmental effects of their proposed action(s), and reasonable alternatives, prior to making decisions.

• **Major Actions/Decision Points**
  - Lease Issuance (Survey Work)
  - Plan Approval (Site Assessment, Construction and Operation, or General Activities)
  - Decommissioning Activities
Overview: Standard NEPA Process

Scoping

Publish NOI

30 Day Comment Period

Environmental Consultations run concurrently with EA prep

Prepare EA with cooperating agencies considering public input

Publish NOA

30 Day Comment Period

Conclude consultations - revise EA if necessary based on public comment and/or consultations

FONSI

OR

Prepare EIS
What is an Environmental Assessment (EA)?

• An EA is a concise public document which:
  • Briefly provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS);
  • Aids an agency's compliance with NEPA when no EIS is necessary (better alternatives and mitigation measures) and;
  • Facilitates preparation of an EIS when one is necessary.
Proposed Action: What is considered

- Lease Issuance
- Associated site characterization surveys
- Subsequent site assessment activities
Proposed Action: What is NOT considered

• Installation, operation, and decommissioning of a commercial wind energy facility
• If an eventual lessee were to submit a construction and operations plan, BOEM would conduct a project specific environmental analysis that would likely take the form of an EIS
Other Alternatives

- Alternative B – Leasing of the Whole WEA, Restricting Site Assessment Structure Placement within 2 NM of a TSS

- Alternative C – No Action

- Others alternatives were considered but not analyzed in the EA as they did not meet the purpose and need and/or they were not reasonable. These are outlined in Section 2.4 of the EA
Impact Producing Factors

- Vessel Traffic
- Noise (Pile Driving, Surveys)
- Vessel Collisions/Allisions
- Bottom Disturbance
- Emissions and Discharges
- Lighting
- Visual and Aesthetic Interference
Environmental and Socioeconomic Resources

- Physical
  - Air Quality
  - Water Quality

- Biological
  - Marine Mammals
  - Sea Turtles
  - Fish and Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)
  - Coastal Habitats
  - Benthic Resources
  - Avian and Bat Species

- Socioeconomic
  - Aesthetics and Visual Resources
  - Commercial and Recreational Fishing
  - Cultural Resources
  - Military Uses
  - Environmental Justice
  - Land Use and Coastal Infrastructure
  - Tourism and Recreation
  - Demographics and Employment
Environmental Lease Stipulations

- Pre-Survey Coordination
- Vessel Strike Avoidance Measures
- Archeological Survey Requirements and Discovery Clauses
- HRG and Geotechnical Survey Requirements
- Reporting Requirements

*Additional Construction or Operations Stipulations May Be Added As Terms and Conditions of Plan approval*
EA Findings

- For most resources, reasonably foreseeable impacts were negligible to minor.
- Potential moderate impacts identified for marine mammals and sea turtles
  - Only result from noise related to pile driving (i.e., meteorological tower construction)
  - SOCs developed to minimize or eliminate these potential impacts
- No reasonably foreseeable significant impacts are expected to occur as a result of the proposed action
Consultations

- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)
- Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA)
- Endangered Species Act (ESA)
- Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Essential Fish Habitat (EFH))
Environmental Assessment: Next Steps

- 30-day comment period closes on July 6, 2016
- BOEM will review all comments received and either:
  - Revised the EA and/or;
  - Issues a Finding of No Significant Impact or;
  - Prepare an EIS
Contact Information

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How to comment on the EA

In written form, deliver to:
Office of Renewable Energy Programs
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
45600 Woodland Road (VAM-OREP)
Sterling, Virginia 20166

Electronically:
http://www.boem.gov/About-BOEM/Public-Engagement/Public-Engagement-Opportunities.aspx

- Click on “Documents Open for Public Comment” and choose the “Open Comments Document” link. Please use the documents titled “Environmental Assessments; Availability, etc.: Commercial Wind Lease Issuance and Site Assessment Activities on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf Offshore New York”