

Planning and Environmental Review for Commercial Wind Leasing Offshore North Carolina

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
NC Task Force Meeting

August 2012



Stage 1: Planning and Analysis

- Establish Task Force, engage stakeholders
- Publish Call for Information and Nominations and Notice of Intent
- Announce Area Identification
- Conduct environmental compliance reviews

What is a Call?

- Notice published in the *Federal Register*
- Requests information for BOEM to consider in the planning, analysis, and decision-making process
- Not a decision to lease

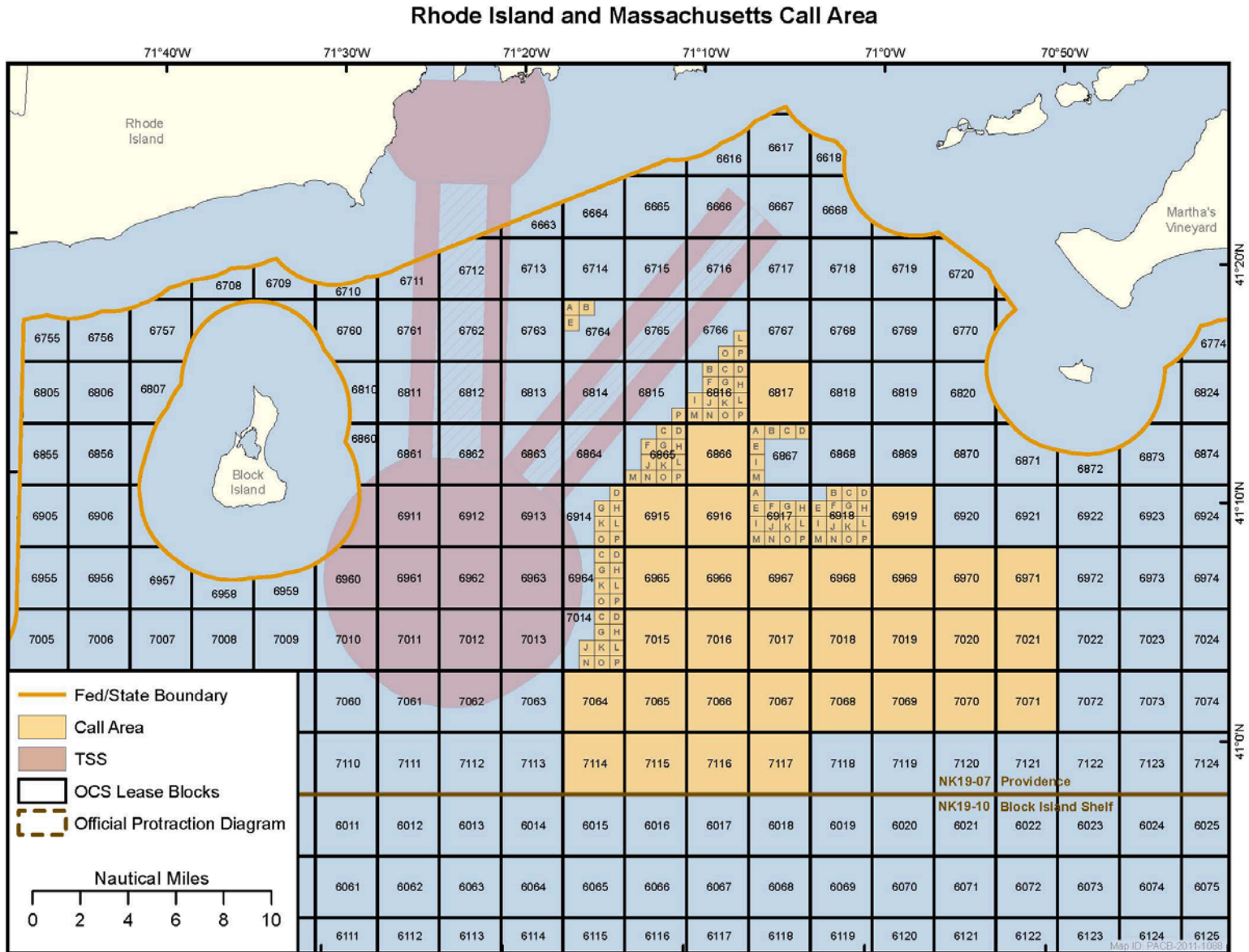
What is Area Identification?

- Area Identification is the BOEM process to identify a Wind Energy Area (WEA)
- Considers comments received on Call and NOI
- Considers potential conflicts with site assessment and characterization activities and turbine construction

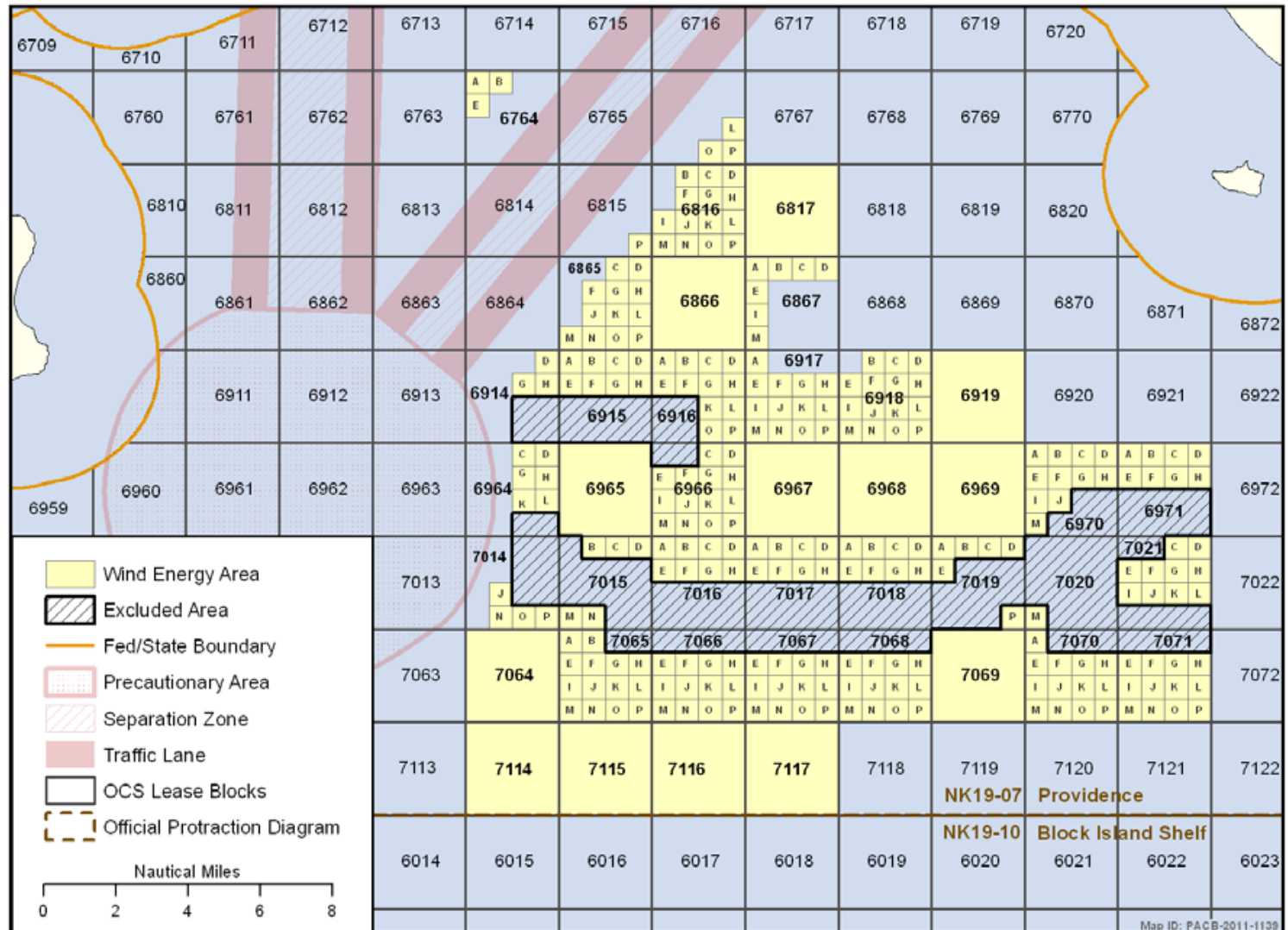
Area Identification Success: RI/MA WEA

- Comments received from RI Fisheries Working Group recommended the exclusion of an area of great importance to commercial fisheries (Cox's Ledge)
- BOEM accepted the RI Fisheries Working Group recommendations in full

RI/MA Before Area ID



RI/MA After Area ID

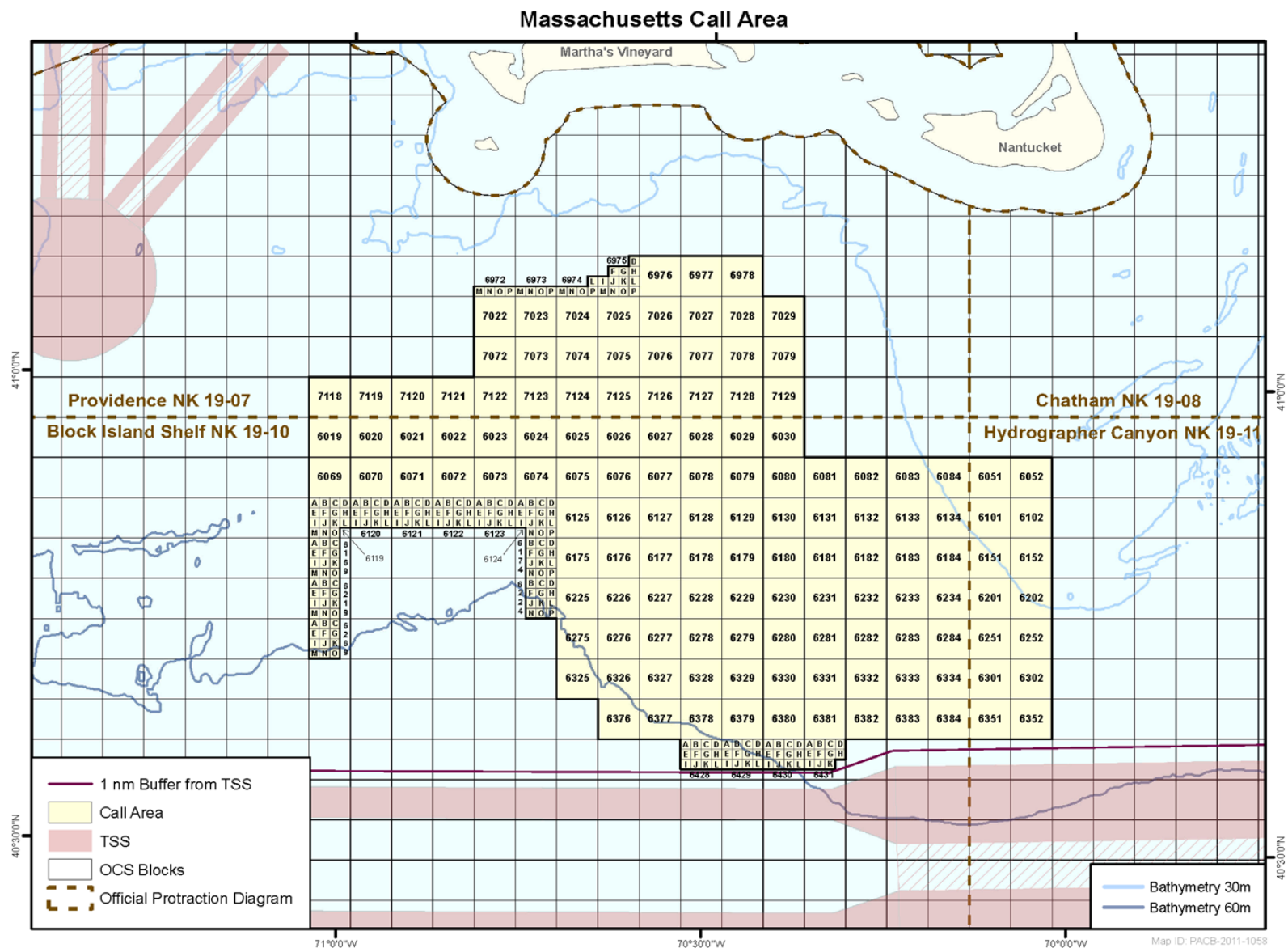


Area Identification Success:

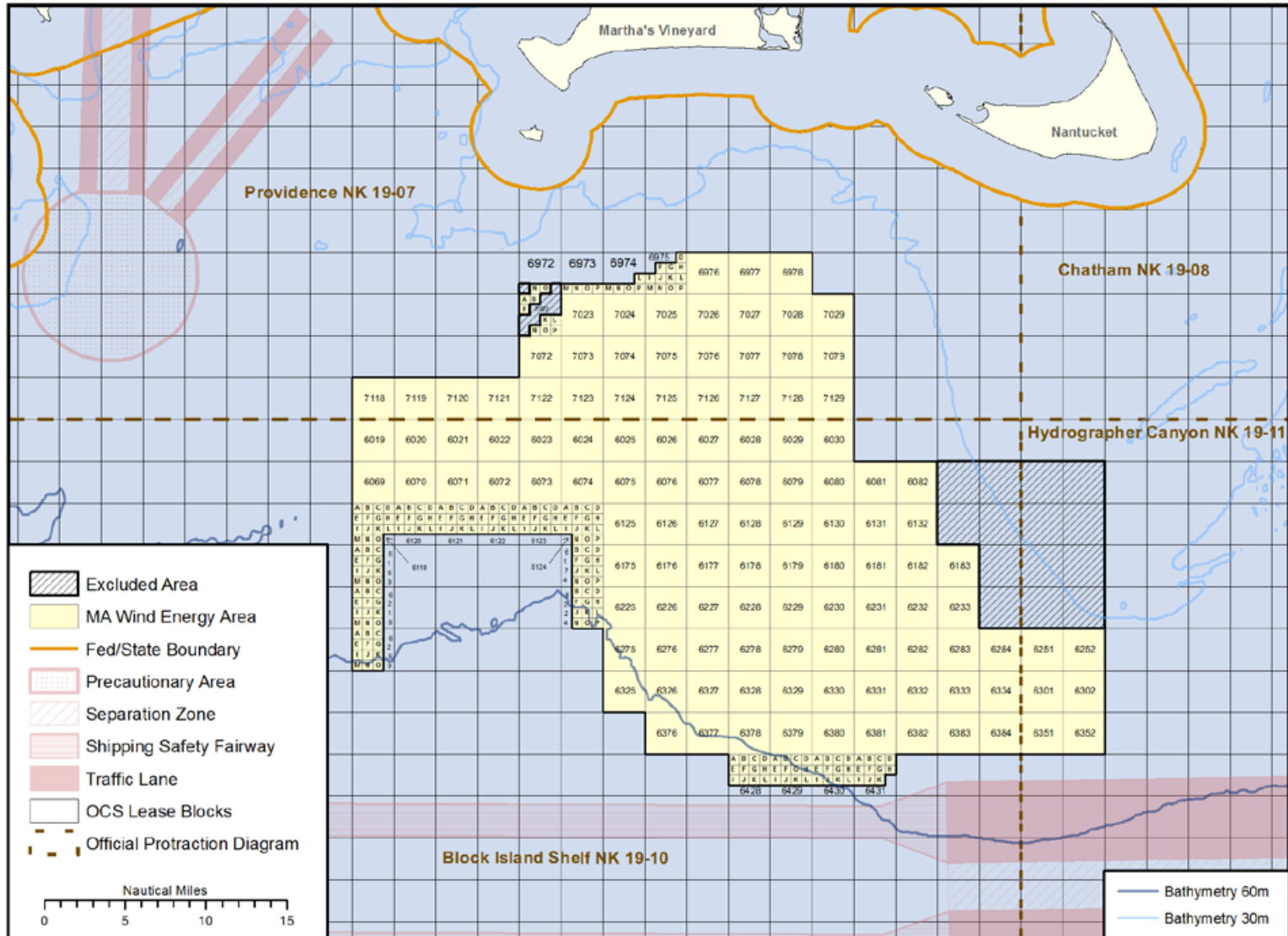
MA WEA

- Important commercial fishery (Cox's ledge) extended into western portion of MA WEA
- Comments received identified an important habitat for sea ducks west of Nantucket Shoals (in the northeastern portion of the MA Call Area)
- Confirmed by numerous studies
- BOEM excluded blocks with greatest concentrations of sea ducks and removal of extension of Cox's ledge

MA Before Area ID



MA After Area ID



Stage 2: Leasing

- Competitive or noncompetitive process
- Depends on number and location of qualified nominations received in response to the Call

Stage 2: Leasing

- Continue to engage stakeholders and consult through the task force
- Publish leasing notices
 - Determination of No Competitive Interest (Noncompetitive)
 - Proposed and Final Sale Notices (Competitive)
- Issue Lease(s)
 - Negotiate lease (Noncompetitive)
 - Hold lease sale (Competitive)

Stage 2: Leasing

- Leases convey right to submit plans required to proceed to the next stages—site assessment and commercial development
- Lessee must receive BOEM's approval of each plan before conducting site assessment or construction and operations

Stage 3: Site Assessment & Characterization

- Lessee will conduct surveys on the leasehold (**site characterization**)
- If lessee intends to install a bottom-founded data collection facility (meteorological tower or buoy), it must submit a Site Assessment Plan (SAP) for review and approval by BOEM (**site assessment**)
- BOEM conducts environmental and technical reviews of the lessee's SAP

Stage 3: Site Assessment & Characterization

- The lessee has a site assessment term of up to 5 years
- If lessee decides to proceed to commercial development, it must submit a Construction and Operations Plan (COP) to BOEM for review and approval

Stage 4: Commercial Development

- The lessee's COP includes:
 - Results of site characterization surveys
 - Offshore and onshore support
 - Any proposed mitigation and monitoring and lease stipulation compliance
 - Design, fabrication, installation, and operations concepts
 - Decommissioning and site clearance concepts
 - Navigational Risk Assessment
- BOEM conducts necessary environmental and technical reviews and consultations

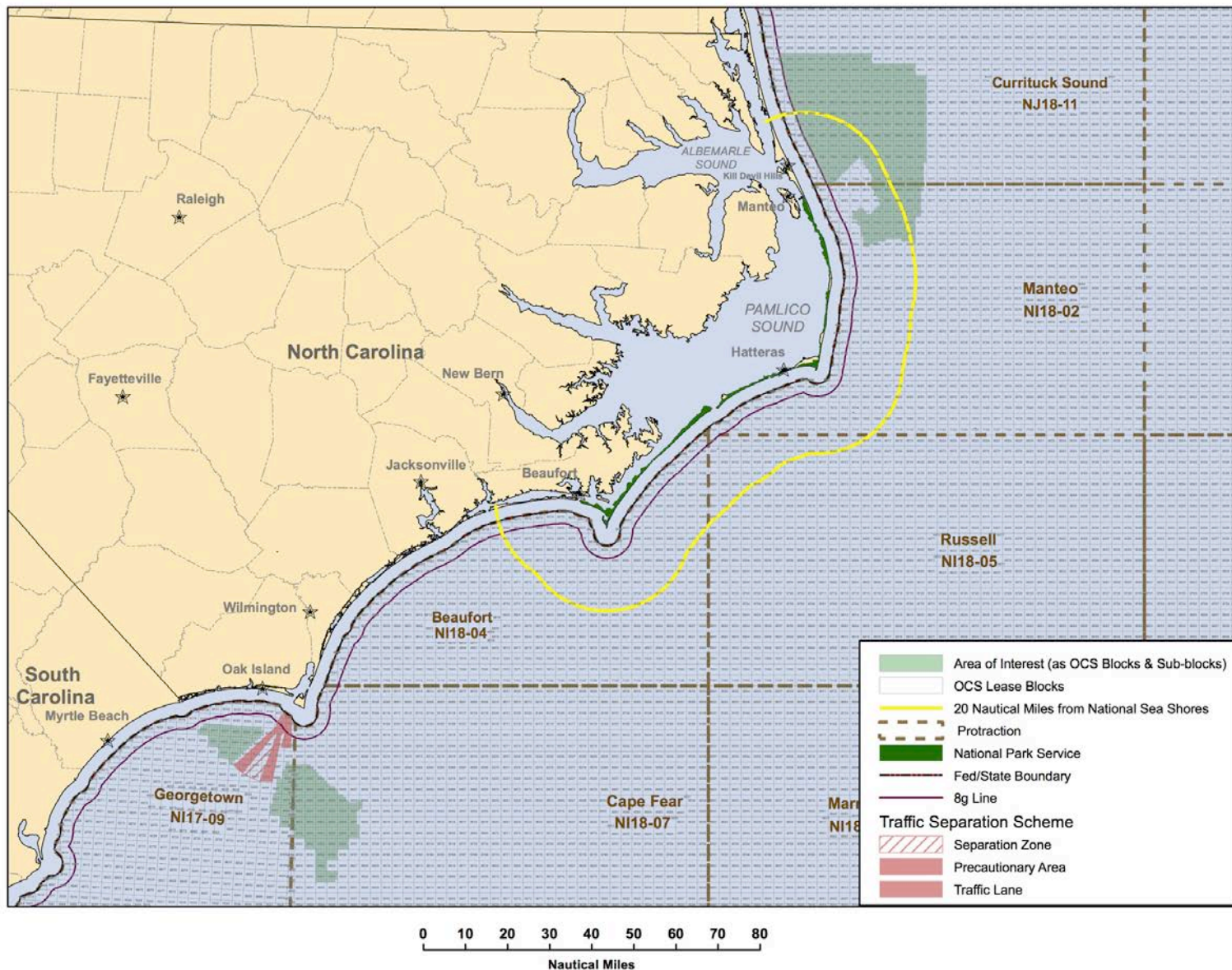
Stage 4: Commercial Development

- If BOEM approves the COP, the lessee will have an approximate 25-year term in which to construct facilities and generate electricity
- After operations term ends, the lease expires and decommissioning is required unless a renewal is granted

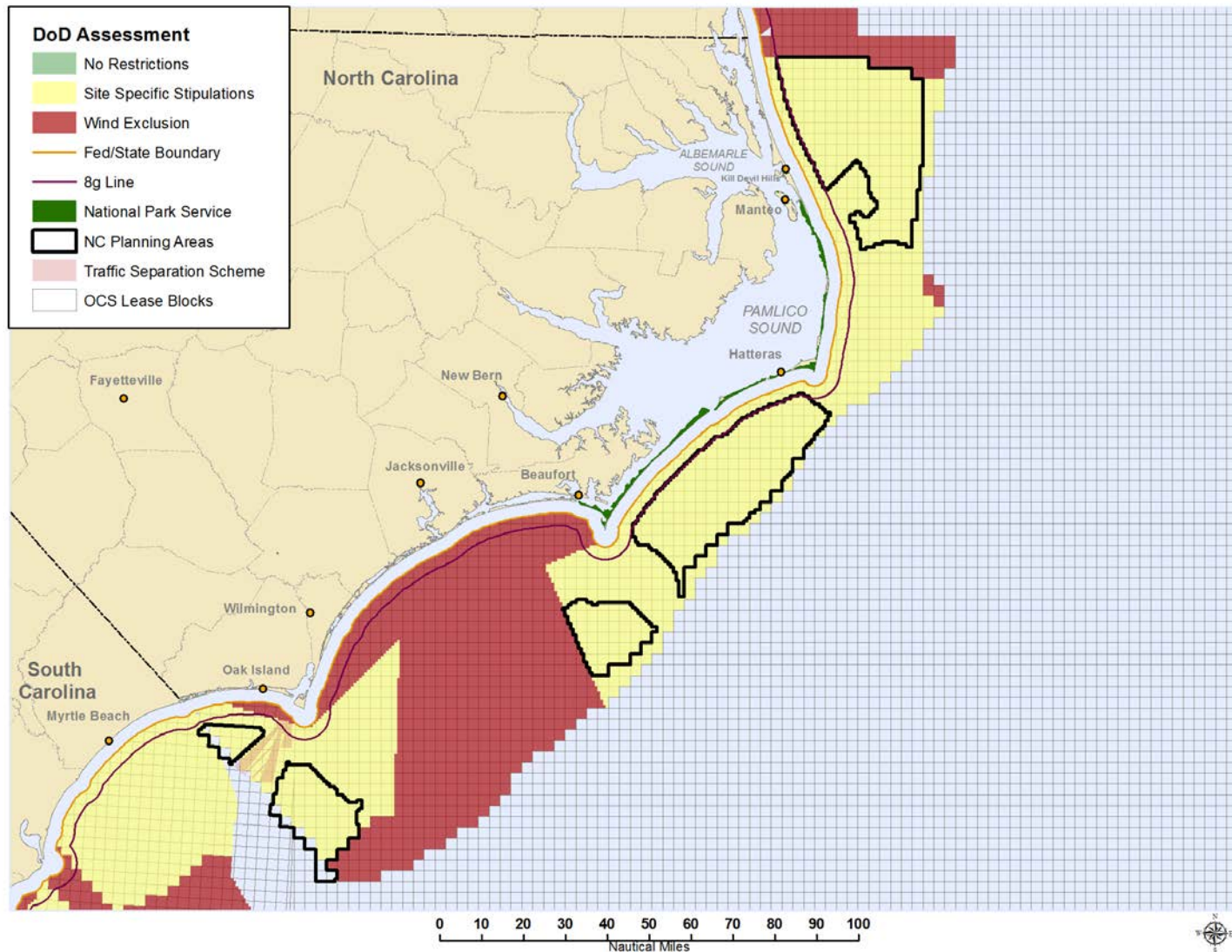
Opportunity for Public Comment

- All four stages provide for stakeholder engagement and public comment
 - Stakeholder meetings
 - Intergovernmental task force meetings:
public Q&A sessions
 - NOI to prepare an EA or EIS
 - Scoping meetings for EISs
 - Hearings and comment periods for draft EISs

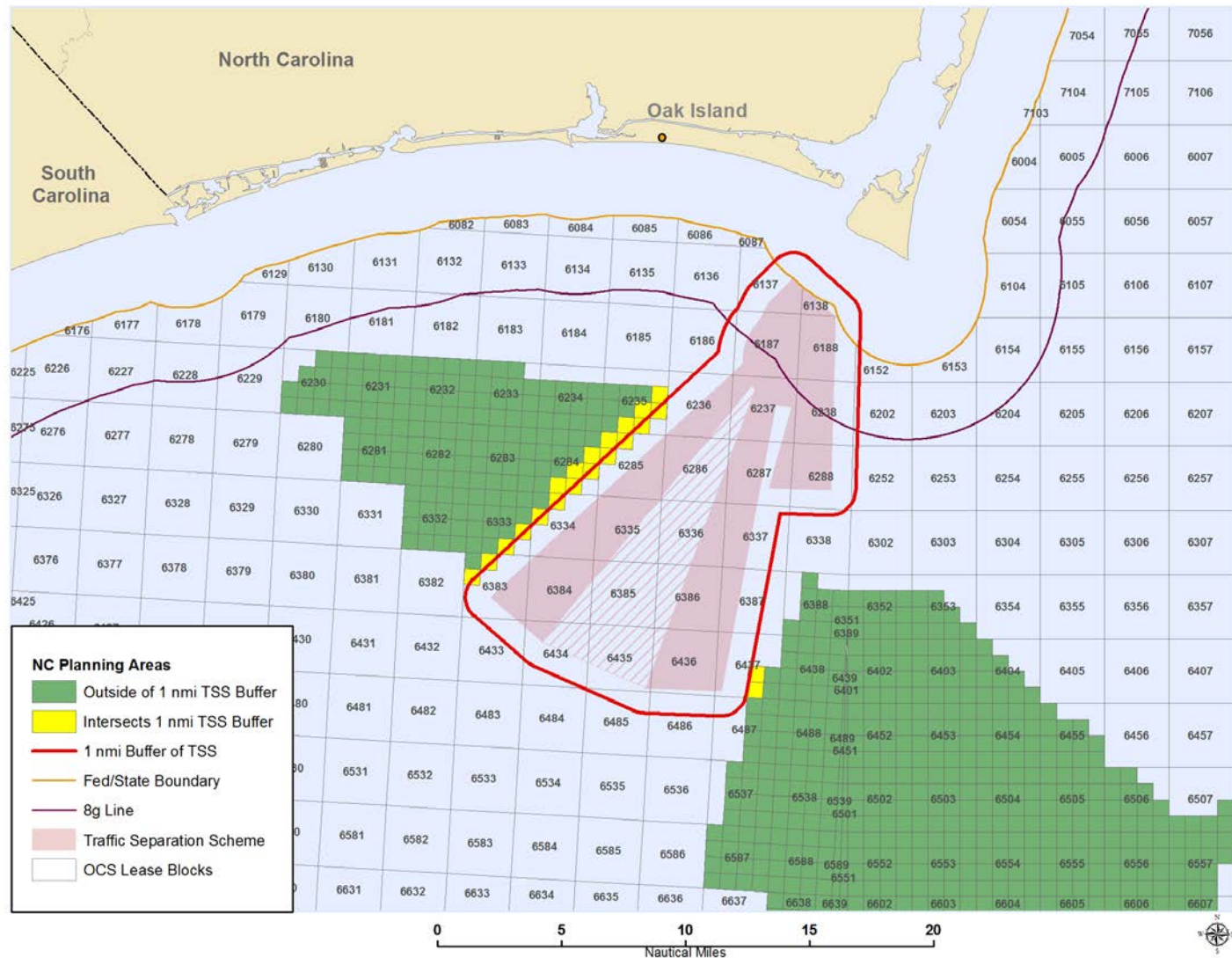
Areas for Call Inclusion



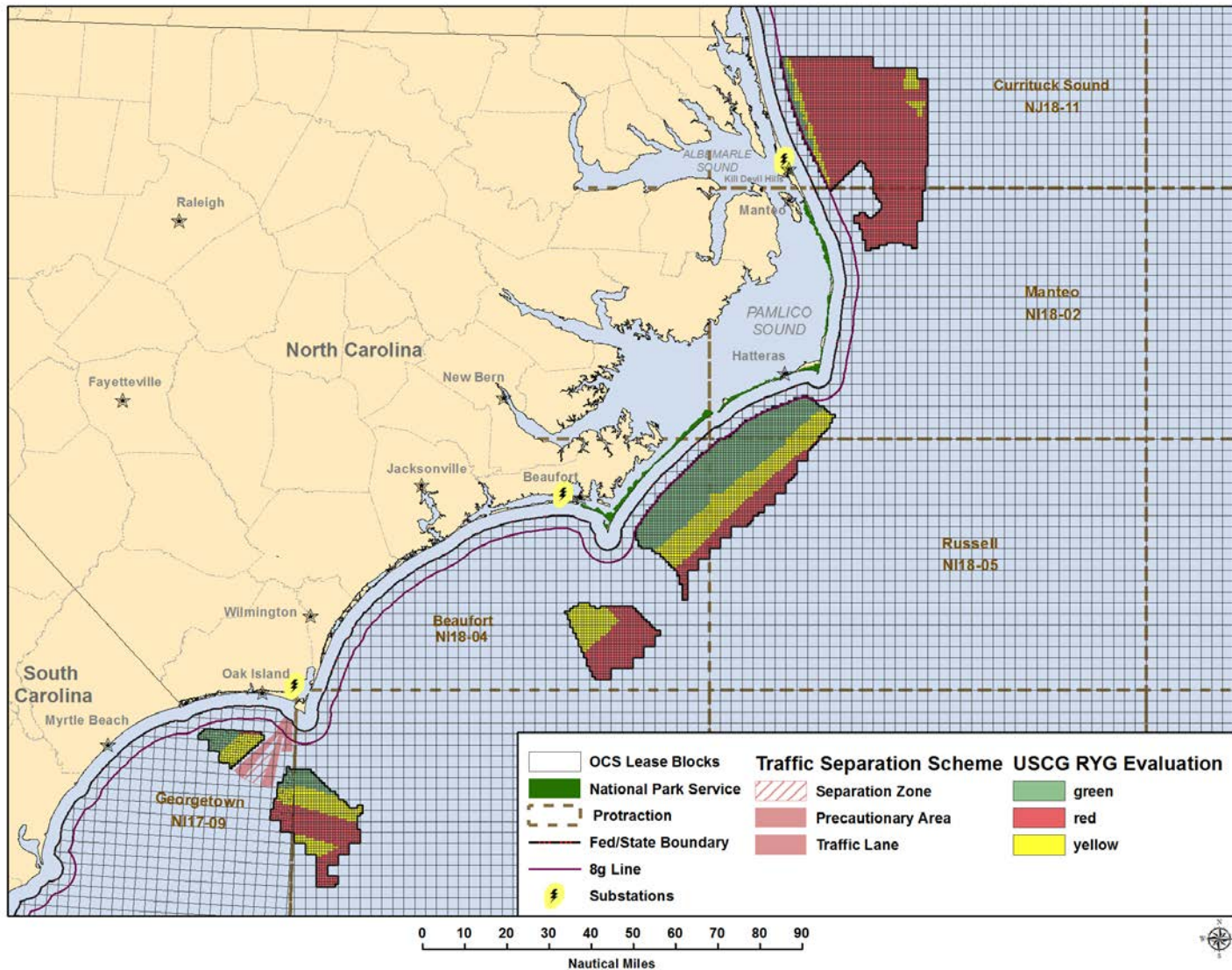
DoD Site-Specific Stipulations



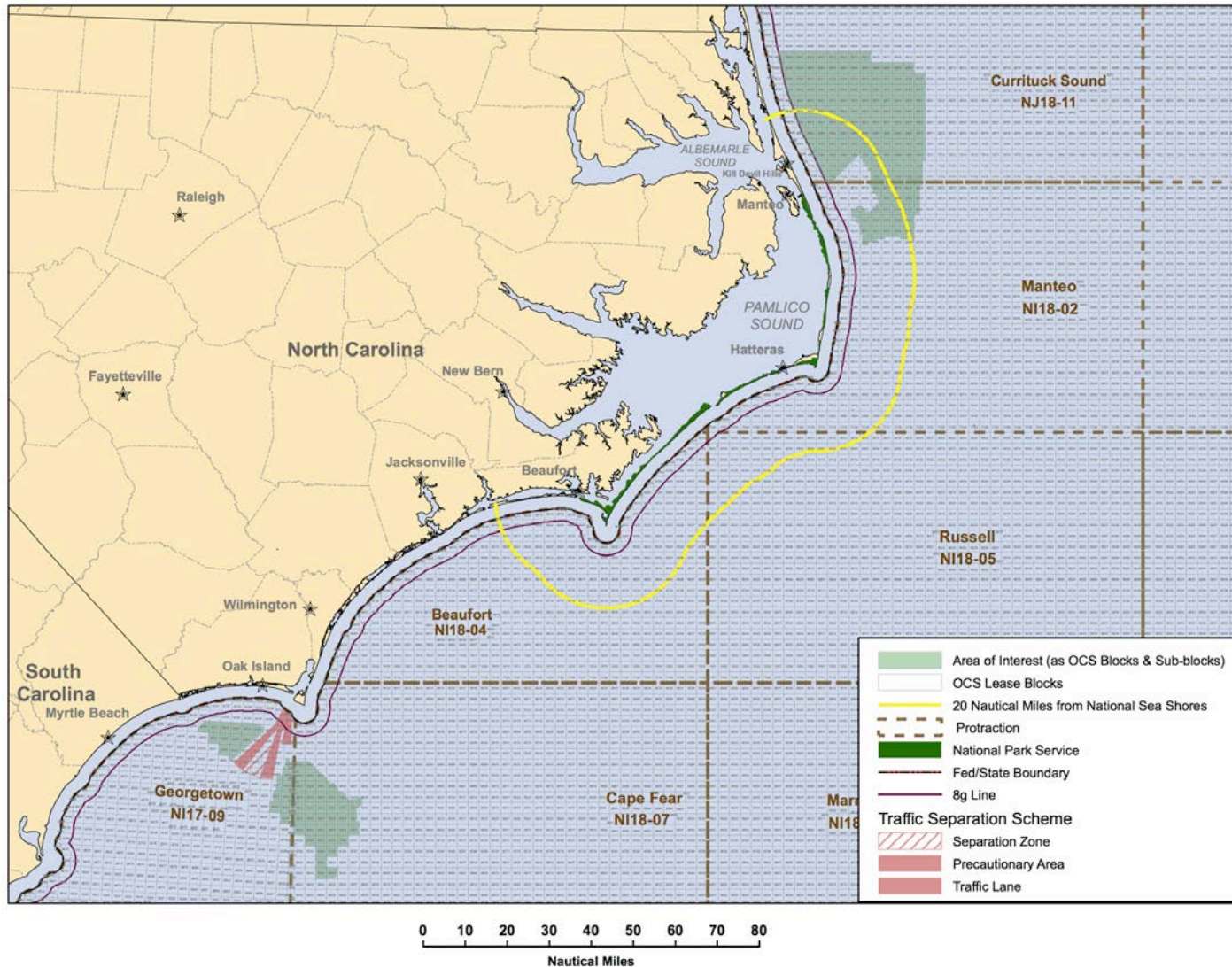
U.S. Coast Guard Stipulations



Vessel Traffic Concerns



National Park Service Concerns



Environmental Assessment

- The WEA will form the basis for the proposed action to be analyzed in BOEM's EA
- BOEM will formulate and analyze reasonable alternatives to the proposed action
- BOEM also will complete consultations required by other laws

EA Scenario

- BOEM will develop a scenario consisting of routine and non-routine activities expected as a result of commercial wind lease issuance in the area
- Routine activities will include:
 - Site characterization surveys
 - Site assessment activities
- Non-routine activities will include:
 - Severe storms
 - Vessel collisions and allisions
 - Spills of oil or other pollutants

Analysis of Socioeconomic Conditions

- Commercial and recreational fishing activities
- Cultural resources
- Recreational resources
- Demographics and employment
- Environmental justice
- Land use and coastal infrastructure
- Other uses of the area

Analysis of Physical and Biological Resources

- Physical Resources
 - Air quality
 - Water quality
- Biological Resources
 - Fish and essential fish habitat (EFH)
 - Marine mammals
 - Birds and bats
 - Sea turtles
 - Benthic resources
 - Coastal habitats

Examples of Alternatives that May Be Analyzed

- Geographic Alternatives (i.e. buffers from land)
- Fishing Conflicts Alternatives
- Timing/Seasonal Alternatives
- Ship/Vessel Conflicts Alternatives
- No Action Alternative

Analysis of Cumulative Impacts

- Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions:
 - Onshore development
 - Existing port and waterway usage
 - Maritime traffic
 - Other renewable energy activities

Consultations

- National Historic Preservation Act
- Government to Government Consultations
- Endangered Species Act
- Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (EFH)
- Marine Mammal Protection Act
- Coastal Zone Management Act

EA Findings

- If the EA finds that lease issuance and site characterization and assessment activities will have significant impacts, BOEM will undertake preparation of an EIS
- If the EA results in a FONSI, BOEM may issue commercial wind leases and approve SAPs based on that finding

Questions?

Submitting Comments in Response to the Call and NOI

- The Call solicits nominations from potential lessees, as well as information from any interested or affected party who wishes to provide information on issues and resources including:
 - Geological and geophysical conditions
 - Archaeological and cultural resource sites
 - Historic properties
 - Other uses of the area
 - Other relevant socioeconomic, biological, and environmental information

Submitting Comments in Response to the Call and NOI

- The NOI requests interested and affected parties to identify:
 - Issues and alternatives to be considered in the EA
 - Potential mitigation measures
 - Sources of information relevant to the analysis