

THE NEWS ROOM

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BOEMRE Announces It Will Reduce Area Offshore Massachusetts Under Consideration for Commercial Wind Energy Leasing

WASHINGTON – The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE) today announced that it is reducing the area under consideration for future commercial wind energy leasing on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) offshore Massachusetts. This reduction is in response to multiple comments received in response to a Request for Interest (RFI) issued on December 29, 2010. The RFI invited the public to provide information useful to BOEMRE in evaluating the suitability of the identified area for potential future leasing. The RFI also asked that wind energy developers describe their interest in acquiring commercial leases for potential future projects. Today's announcement comes as BOEMRE holds a joint meeting with the Rhode Island and Massachusetts Renewable Energy Task Forces today to discuss activities around their Area of Mutual Interest.

"We have heard significant concerns from the people of Massachusetts and we have acted on those concerns," said BOEMRE Director Michael R. Bromwich. "BOEMRE is committed to continuing the public engagement process as we look to identify the potential areas for offshore energy development in the federal waters south of Massachusetts."

In response to the RFI, BOEMRE received nearly 250 comments, including several from the Massachusetts commercial fishing community, the Governor's office, and the congressional delegation, which argued for the reduction of the area under consideration. Comments also addressed other uses of the sea and seabed (e.g. environmental, cultural and socioeconomic) and expressions of interest for commercial wind.

BOEMRE has received 11 submissions from ten companies describing commercial leasing interest within the RFI area. BOEMRE is reviewing these submissions for completeness and also to evaluate legal, technical and financial qualifications to hold an OCS renewable energy lease.

BOEMRE has not yet identified an area that may be offered for leasing or approved for subsequent development. Next steps include continued meetings of the Massachusetts Renewable Energy Task Force to inform members of the submissions of interest, comments received, and to discuss next steps, including the identification of a "Smart from the Start Wind Energy Area" and the development of a Call for Information and Nominations. After consulting with Task Force members and stakeholders, BOEMRE may further modify the area under consideration for potential commercial wind energy leasing.

The Massachusetts RFI area was selected through consultation with the Task Force, an intergovernmental coordination group led by BOEMRE. Task Force members include federal and state agencies, tribal governments, and local entities that have a role in permitting, reviewing or regulating resources or activities that are involved in energy development on the OCS.

For additional information, go to:

<http://www.boemre.gov/offshore/RenewableEnergy/StateActivities.htm#Massachusetts>.

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