

THE NEWS ROOM

FOR RELEASE:
May 23, 2011

THE BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY
MANAGEMENT,
REGULATION AND ENFORCEMENT

Office of Public Affairs

BOEMRE to Prepare an Environmental Assessment for Marine Hydrokinetic Technology Testing Offshore Florida

WASHINGTON – The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE) today announced that it is taking the first step toward issuing a lease that would authorize the testing of equipment designed to use ocean currents offshore Florida to generate electricity on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS).

“This is the first lease application BOEMRE has received to test ocean current equipment on the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf,” said BOEMRE Director Michael R. Bromwich. “Before a leasing decision is made, we are preparing an environmental assessment under the National Environmental Policy Act and are providing an opportunity for public input concerning these activities.”

Florida Atlantic University has applied for a lease to deploy an experimental demonstration device, which is the action that has prompted the need for BOEMRE to conduct an Environmental Assessment (EA). The proposed lease area covers three OCS blocks located approximately nine to 15 nautical miles offshore Fort Lauderdale.

BOEMRE is preparing an EA to consider the environmental consequences associated with issuing a lease, which will include environmental impacts that may result from installing a buoy, deploying small-scale ocean current devices, and operating a deployment vessel in the area that would be covered by the lease. The EA will consider environmental issues, including impacts to benthic habitats, marine mammals, sea turtles, pelagic fishes, and existing human uses.

A Request for Information published in November 2007 announced that BOEMRE had established an interim policy under which it would issue limited leases authorizing renewable energy resource assessment, data collection, and technology testing activities on the OCS and that it was accepting nominations for limited leases to conduct these activities. Limited leases have a term of five years and do not authorize the commercial production or transmission of energy.

BOEMRE received more than 40 nominations proposing areas for limited leases on the OCS off the Pacific and Atlantic coasts, and identified 16 proposed lease areas for priority consideration based on the technological complexity of the project proposed, timing needs, competing OCS space-use issues, and relevant state-supported renewable energy activities and initiatives. BOEMRE also considered the importance of supporting the advancement of activities related to developing wind, current and wave energy.

Of the 16 areas, BOEMRE identified four proposed areas offshore Florida as priority areas for testing ocean current technology and collecting resource data. In April 2008, BOEMRE solicited expressions of competitive interest in leasing any of these nominated areas and received no indications of competitive interest in acquiring leases within these four areas offshore Florida, which include the three blocks of interest to Florida Atlantic University. More information about interim policy leases can be found at: http://www.boemre.gov/offshore/RenewableEnergy/RegulatoryInformation.htm#Interim_Policy.

BOEMRE is requesting public comment and input from federal, state and local government agencies, tribal governments and other interested parties to identify environmental issues and any alternatives that should be considered in the EA. Input is also requested on measures that would mitigate impacts to environmental resources and socioeconomic conditions that could result from leasing and the technology

testing activities in the potential lease area. The notice is available today for review in *Federal Register*: <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/public-inspection/index.html>.

Written comments on the proposed lease for Florida Atlantic University to conduct data collection and technology testing activities may be sent to BOEMRE by June 23, 2011 in one of the following ways:

1. Electronically: <http://www.regulations.gov>. In the entry titled "Enter Keyword or ID" enter "BOEM-2011-0012", then click "Search". Follow the instructions to submit public comments and view supporting and related materials.
2. In written form, delivered by hand or by mail, addressed to Program Manager, Office of Offshore Alternative Energy Programs (MS 4090), Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement, 381 Elden Street, Herndon, VA 20170.

For more information about BOEMRE's Alternative Energy Program, go to:

<http://www.boemre.gov/offshore/RenewableEnergy/PDFs/BOEMREAlternativeEnergyfactsheet.pdf>.

Contact: [BOEMRE Public Affairs](#)