

Joint Rhode Island & Massachusetts Renewable Energy Task Force Meeting Summary May 16, 2017

Prepared: May 2017

Executive Summary

This joint meeting of the Massachusetts and Rhode Island Task Forces focused on providing tribal, federal, state, and local government members with an update on BOEM's activities in Rhode Island and Massachusetts and details on the key steps moving forward. The meeting took place as the process in this region moves from broader planning to specific Site Assessment Plans (SAPs) and Construction and Operations Plans (COPs) by developers with leases. The presenters also outlined key next steps in additional leasing process, including the upcoming publication of a draft Proposed Sale Notice for two unleased areas in the Massachusetts WEA.

A number of themes emerged from the presentations and discussion sessions, including the following:

- Lessees are moving forward with environmental surveys, developing their stakeholder outreach plans, and exploring ways to increase community benefits.
- Task Force members would like the lessees to coordinate on cable routes and construction staging as much as possible in order to reduce impacts to communities and benthic habitats.
- Task Force members want to better understand how BOEM accounts for navigational and fishing impacts, and how it will gather feedback on these impacts in future phases.
- With regard to an upcoming Proposed Sale Notice (PSN), Task Force members suggested that BOEM reconsider its methods for determining the minimum bid per acre and a minimum deposit at the upcoming auction, now that more information on wind energy auctions is available.
- Task Force members see an important role for the Task Forces in future phases of offshore wind development.
- A regional component to Task Force meetings has support but there are concerns about losing voices at the table, particularly of local voices, if BOEM moves to a regional model.
- The scale of competitive interest and offtake mechanisms for offshore wind along the Eastern Seaboard demonstrates the U.S. growth of this industry.
- In assessing submitted SAPs and future COPs, BOEM will review previous stakeholder comments about areas of concern, such as navigation safety and potential impacts to fishing.

DISCLAIMER: This meeting summary was prepared by BOEM's contractor, Consensus Building Institute (CBI), and is not meant to be a word for word account of the Task Force meeting, but to be used as a reference. For any questions regarding the content of the meeting, please contact BOEM's Office of Renewable Energy Programs at (703) 787-1300.