

South Carolina Outer Continental Shelf Planning for Commercial Wind Leasing

Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Assessment and BOEM Environmental Review Process

Brian Krevor
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

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What is a Notice of Intent (NOI)?

- The NOI to prepare an Environmental Assessment is a Federal Register Notice published to:
 - Notify the public of BOEM's intent to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA).
 - Solicit input on what resources and issues BOEM should consider in the EA.
 - Identify alternatives to be considered in the EA.
- An NOI would be published concurrently with the Call for Information and Nominations.

What is an EA?

- Determines if an action has significant impacts
- Informs decision makers of the environmental consequences of a federal action
- Required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

Preparation of the EA

- The Wind Energy Area (identified through Area ID) will form the basis for the proposed action analyzed in the EA.
- The proposed action includes:
 - Lease issuance.
 - Associated site characterization (i.e., surveys).
 - Subsequent site assessment (construction and operation of meteorological towers and buoys).

Preparation of the EA (Cont.)

- Have prepared similar EAs for areas offshore multiple East Coast states
 - Mid-Atlantic EA (NJ, DE, MD, and VA)
 - RI/MA EA
 - MA EA
 - NC EA (in development)
- BOEM would take a similar approach in preparing the EA for South Carolina

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 (shallow hazards, geological & geophysical, geotechnical, archaeological, biological).
 - Site assessment activities (installation of meteorological towers and buoys) .
- Non-routine activities will include:
 - Severe storms.
 - Vessel collisions and allisions.
 - Spills of oil or other pollutants.

EA Scenario (Cont.)

- BOEM will not consider commercial wind development (i.e., wind facility construction) in this EA.
- The environmental impacts of a commercial wind facility would be analyzed when/if a lessee submits a COP. This would take the form of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Environmental and Socioeconomic Resources Considered

■ 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

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

Consultations

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

EA Findings

- If the EA finds that the proposed action will have significant impacts, BOEM will undertake preparation of an EIS.
- If the EA results in a FONSI, BOEM may issue commercial wind leases.

Questions?



Brian Krevor, Environmental Protection Specialist

brian.krevor@boem.gov

703-787-1346