U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT

In Re:)
)
Programmatic Environmental)
Impact Statement)
Proposed Geological and)
Geophysical Activities in the)
Mid- and South Atlantic OCS)
Planning Areas)

TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC HEARING

AFTERNOON SESSION

Sheraton Suites
422 Delaware Avenue
Wilmington, Delaware
Thursday, April 26, 2012
1:05 p.m.

HELD BY: JAMES BENNETT - Division of Environmental Assessment Chief

APPEARANCES:

JILL LEWANDOWSKI
MEGAN BUTTERWORTH
KIM OLSEN
ROBIN SCHURICHT
CAREN MADSEN

MR. BENNETT: Well, good afternoon, everybody. Welcome to this public hearing on the draft programmatic environmental impact statement for geological and geophysical activities in the Mid and South Atlantic.

Safety first. The exit is right behind you there. There are also exits this way, in the event of an emergency. The stairs are over by the elevator. And also, the restrooms are just to the left by the reception desk.

My name is Jim Bennett. I'm the chief of the Division of Environmental Assessment with the Bureau of Ocean and Energy Management at headquarters. And I want to note that the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, which was formed in October of last year through reorganization, is responsible -- we are a bureau within the U.S. Department of the Interior, and we're responsible for the development and the environmental protection of Outer Continental Shelf resources.

We are here to take your comments on the draft programmatic EIS, but I want to make sure that you're aware we have some people here that if you have issues that you want to discuss or questions that you have aside from any

comment-taking that we're going to do, we're here for that purpose, as well.

These people include Jill Lewandowski, who is a marine biologist with our headquarters office. Megan Butterworth, who is also a marine biologist at headquarters. And we also have some folks from CSA International, who do a lot of work for us on our Outer Continental Shelf activities, including Kim Olsen, who is the deputy project manager for this project, and Robin Schuricht, who is outside at the reception desk.

So, like I said, we're here to hear your comments. If you have questions, we'll be happy to talk with you. And we would like, before we take the comments, to give you a brief overview of what the project is, and what the environmental impact statement contains.

And with that, I'll turn it over to Jill Lewandowski.

MS. LEWANDOWSKI: Okay. So we're going to take just a few minutes now to go through the different parts of the document, the purpose for it, what sort of content you can find in there, what are the different alternatives or

policy options that we're considering here. And you know, then, at that point, we'll move on to taking actual official notes.

Just to give you an idea of where we are, we have been doing a number of public hearings since April the 16th. We're nearing the end of them now. There's a few more -- two happening today, both in Wilmingtons, and one more in Atlantic City tomorrow.

So far we've had a pretty good turnout in some cities, and there's been a lot of interest, so we have been pleased with the turnout and the sorts of comments that we have been receiving.

What happens, if you're not familiar with the NEPA process, this EIS is being issued under the National Environmental Policy Act, and that's basically the opportunity for us as the Federal government to share with you what we're thinking of, the things that we're considering as we're looking at these potential actions, the sorts of mitigations we're thinking of considering, the different alternatives.

And what we do after we develop the draft programmatic EIS is we put it out for

public comment. And that's probably what you all have seen at this point, and we allow a comment period of 60 days.

During that 60 days, people can submit comments in writing. You can come to the public meetings that we have, you can contact us if you have questions. It's all generally focused on being able to solicit that information on what you think about the analysis that we've provided so far, and what options that you have a preference for.

So again, we're here today to provide you a little bit of an overview, and then to also collect some comments from you. And we do consider public input to be a very important part of the NEPA process. It helps guide us into what the stakeholders generally are feeling and thinking about which direction that we should go.

Now, the purpose of the EIS, basically, it was developed to look at a suite of geological and geophysical measures that we had gotten about -- and we'll talk about this in a minute, but we had received a number of applications from industry, from the oil and gas industry, to go ahead and explore the Outer

Continental Shelf in the Atlantic.

We've also had a number of potential wind farm locations that have also needed an opportunity to explore those sites. And then we do have a number of sand and gravel projects that we operate in the Atlantic, where they also have to use a lot of the same technology, albeit at different intensive levels, to actually explore these.

So what we wanted to do is look at all of this programmatically, and see cumulatively what the effects could be, may or may not be, and what significant effects there may or may not be, and make some decisions based on that.

So pretty much as we go through it and I explain the alternatives, most of it is based on a different level of mitigation measures. And we'll explain that in a minute, and you'll see how we employ that to maybe help provide some parameters to the surveys that may or may not be decided on.

This gives you an idea. We did want to make the point that we have had interest from industry. As the Government, we are not going

out there doing these surveys ourselves. Generally industry has to come to us and request it. And right now, we've had about 11 different applications over the last few years to conduct these more deep seismic surveys for oil and gas.

We know there's been a number of interests we've had for site assessment plans for renewable projects like wind farms. And then, of course, I mentioned we also have a sand and gravel program that goes on, and those geological surveys associated with the sand and gravel also have to be permitted.

This slide gives you an idea of the types of areas and the interest levels. Where it darker, that's where more people have expressed interest in exploring them, than where it lighter.

And of course, this doesn't put into effect any mitigations. This does not assume that all these folks would be out there at the same time, even if we were to approve them.

So, the proposed action. I mentioned there's a number of permits that we've had in, but just to make it clear, it's for the two planning areas. We do actually have actually

four planning areas in the Atlantic, but the only two we're talking about here are the Mid-Atlantic and the South Atlantic.

So it does not cover anything essentially north of Delaware or south of sort of the -- not even the midpoint of Florida. And it is to cover not just oil and gas program activities, but also renewable program activities and marine minerals, is what we would call sand and gravel.

Geological and geophysical. If you're not familiar with those terms, geological, that's a lot of things that are done sort of in the ground to test, whether it be to drill, from light, sort of shallow test drilling, not the type of drilling you would see like with an exploratory -- where they're actually going to drill a well that could actually produce. This is just some test drilling.

Geophysical, most people are familiar with seismic surveys. That's the type of survey, geophysical survey that gets the most interest. And they can use a lot of different sources, sounds sources to do that. Sometimes it's airguns, sometimes it could be a boomer, a

sparker, a chirper.

There's a lot of different things that can be used, and the type of equipment that's used and the size of it has a lot to do with what kind of effect there might be or may not be on the environment.

Routine operations, we're going to go through pretty much in the analysis. We do have a suite of subject matter experts that do the analyses, with CSA International.

Basically what happens in an analysis is you have meteorologists, archaeologists, biologists, physical oceanographers, socioeconomic.

You have all those folks that are looking at this, and you're looking at what's been proposed and you're looking at all the different alternatives, and you're looking at all the available information and the science, and you're trying to decide and provide a written analysis of what you think the impact could be to the various resources, with and without the mitigation.

And so, when we -- we do it generally by routine operations, and you can see

the list there. And we also do the same analysis for what we would call accidental events. In this case it would be a fuel spill from a seismic vessel.

And all the different "-ologies" I mentioned, this slide gives you a little bit of an idea of the different resource areas. This is not a complete slide, but it will give you an idea that we are trying to look at the environment and the ecosystem as a whole, and not just a few, you know, select resource groups out of that.

Three alternatives that we've identified in here. And again, we take the proposed action, which is the level of activity that's been put in front of us, whether it's been through, again, applications we've received or whether it's through interest that we know and have been informed of that will be coming up.

And from there, when it comes -- because this is an EIS, it has a heavy focus on noise exposure, because these -- the actions themselves do put noise into the water.

So the alternatives that we've broken down in here are basically the first one,

alternative A, is going to include a lot of basic mitigation that we already associate with seismic surveys in other areas of the U.S.

We've also put on there a time area closure for North Atlantic Right Whales, and also put in some additional mitigation. And I'm going to show you those maps in a minute, so you'll get to see visually what we're talking about.

Alternative B, I would say that takes all the mitigations that were in alternative A and it adds some additional ones to it. It expands the time area closures. It adds a small time area closure for sea turtles that are nesting in Florida.

It talks about a separation distance between surveys that are operating at the same time, in order to allow a greater movement corridor if an animal needs to move around, move around vessels that are operating.

And alternative B does also require a passive acoustic monitoring. If you're not familiar with that, we basically do require that there's visual observers that are out there on these vessels, and that within a certain distance from the vessel, from the sound source, they look

for marine mammals and sea turtles. And if they see one, then the equipment either can't be started up or it has to be shut down.

What passive acoustic monitoring does is it adds another component. In addition to the visual observers, you actually have somebody down there listening. That's all they're doing. They're listening to the sounds that are going on out there.

You can actually triangulate a position of a whale, if you're able to pick up their noise. Because we recognize you can't always see the animals, you know. And if you can listen as well as look, that could potentially be a greater protective measure.

And then alternative C is kind of a combination of no action and status quo. No action meaning that we wouldn't move forth on any oil and gas, but right now we do have some approvals that are going on for the smaller surveys that are associated with renewables and sand and gravel. So that would sort of maintain its status quo, where we would look at those actions one action at a time.

Okay. This is alternative A. So

we're looking here at the Right Whale closures, and down in this area here you can see is where there is critical habitat that's been designated for the North Atlantic Right Whale.

And that's because that's an area that's been identified by the National Marine Fisheries Service as an area they do breed. They have very new calves there, and it's an area that has lots of protections to it, regardless of what sort of anthropogenic activities might happen there.

And there's also these corridors, during certain times of the year, these pockets that have been designated by NMFS again to be reduced speed zones. So if you have a lot of commercial vessels coming in there, there's an issue with ship strikes from large ships and Right Whales.

So we are just sort of -- we feel that as a basic option in this alternative A, that that's something that has to be in there; that basically, we would have these time area closures.

MR. PFEISTER: How far out do those -- do these areas go?

MS. LEWANDOWSKI: They're about 20 nautical miles.

MR. PFEISTER: 20 nautical miles?

MS. LEWANDOWSKI: Yeah. 20 nautical miles. And so, I do also want to make the point, and it's a very important point. These are time area closures for the use of seismic airguns. There are other sources that can be used to do these surveys that don't produce -- that are not as intensive with the noise that they produce. And those kind of surveys we would still consider on a case-by-case basis with the appropriate protective measures.

MR. NICHOLS: Do the alternative time area closures pertain to the renewables currently, or are they excluded in this closure?

MS. LEWANDOWSKI: Well, if a renewables use -- the question was, do these time area closures, would they also apply to renewables? Yes, if they use the seismic airgun it would. Same for sand and gravel.

So we're really making that distinction between the use of the seismic airguns versus a small suite of other tools that can be used, that we don't feel put the same

amount of energy into the water as an airgun.

So it really doesn't matter what it's used for. It's just whether or not it's used.

Okay. This is alternative B, and you can see there's some additional areas. That 20 nautical mile corridor has generally been sort of extended through this whole area. Down off of Florida there's been -- there's a sea turtle nesting area here, that there's a small closure area that we would add with that.

And again, to reinforce, the closure areas would be for the use of airguns. If someone were to come to us not proposing to use airguns, we would look at that, even if it falls within those times of year. Okay?

And this is just a close-up off of Brevard County, Florida, where you can see, here is the sea turtle closure area.

And I'll show you a slide in a few minutes that compares all of these alternatives together. Oh. Actually, here it is. So, alternative A would have the Right Whale closure. Alternative B would expand that. And of course, C is a sort of no action/status quo.

The seismic survey protocol, that's the same across alternatives A and alternative B. And the seismic survey protocol is basically, you have to have visual observers on board, you have to establish a distance from the vessel that you need to observe, and if a whale or a dolphin or a sea turtle were to come up, or a pinniped, a seal,' were to come up within that established area, then that visual observer could shut down the survey until the animals were to pass. Or you don't start up the survey.

The protocol also has a measure in there for ramp-up, and that's basically where you slowly turn on your sound source, and you add to it gradually, so you don't put it on at full intensity at once. You actually sort of build.

And the thought behind that is that animals, if they find it bothersome, have the opportunity to move away from the area before it actually gets to a hearing level that might be more bothersome.

MR. NICHOLS: My name is John Nichols. I live in Middletown, Delaware. I'm questioning the mitigation measures and asking whether or not the -- any of the mitigation

measures currently apply to any activity associated with renewable energy?

MS. LEWANDOWSKI: Renewables? Yes.

MR. NICHOLS: Which ones, please.

MS. LEWANDOWSKI: Right now, again, if it's not an airgun, the time area closure -- we haven't imposed a time area closure yet. This would be an airgun or non-airgun issue. If a renewable was to propose an airgun and it was within that time period within the time area closure, that alternative would say the answer is no, you can't.

If they propose another type -- and this could be the same for oil and gas or sand and gravel. If they propose another type of sound source during that time period where the closure is in place, we could consider it. Okay? It's really, it's not what it's for, it's really what equipment it's using. Okay?

MR. NICHOLS: Okay.

MS. LEWANDOWSKI: And then the seismic survey protocol, that is -- sand and gravel, renewables, they all use that.

Passive acoustic monitoring. What we do for alternative A is we have it optional

there. And why would it be optional? Well, right now, as it stands, if you can't observe that exclusion zone, that distance from the vessel, then you can't start up your survey.

What we're saying in alternative A is if you can still observe it acoustically by listening through passive acoustic monitoring, then that's an incentive for you to use it, and you could start your surveys at night, if you were able to observe your exclusion zone acoustically.

Alternative B would require that that be in place at all times. And then when you get down to these -- the separation between the simultaneous surveys, alternative A does not require that. Alternative B would. And again, that separation, the thought behind that is to allow sort of a corridor for animals to move in between vessels that might be out there at the same time.

Also, guidance for vessel strikes, marine debris awareness. These are all things that we already have in place in other areas that we would also implement here. And there's also protocols for the non-airgun surveys that are

consistent with what we apply for any type of survey that's out there. Okay?

Just real briefly, so far with the draft, the initial analyses that the subject matter experts have completed, this gives you a general sense of where we felt were -- what we felt were the sort of range, or the limit of impacts to these different sources.

And you can see, certainly marine mammals, sea turtles, are definitely going to be the ones that rise up, and having the greatest potential for negligible to moderate impacts, because the sound sources that are being used for these surveys, for the most part these are the animals that will be able to hear them. And so, because they hear them, there's a greater potential for them to have effects.

We also will use this NEPA process, and all the information that we gather through it, to do a host of other consultations under a variety of other statutes.

We will do, under the Native Species Act, we will consult with the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service about any endangered species that might be in the

area, any additional measures that may or may not have to be put in place for those species.

We will also do a consultation under the National Historic Preservation Act to make sure that any cultural resources out there, any shipwrecks, all of those things, are protected.

We will also, we ourselves are not going to have the responsibility for doing the Marine Mammal Protection Act, but we are having National Marine Fisheries Service on as a cooperating agency, because they are in charge of issuing the Marine Animal Protection Act authorizations.

And industry will basically need to go to them if there's a survey proposed that could potentially take a marine mammal. And we would have directives in any authorization we issue that that would have to be in place. And that's just some of them.

We also do essential fish habitat consultations. So we can ensure that any activities that we might authorize, that we know what the different issues are with fisheries and fish, and that we can put any necessary mitigations in there, if need be.

So, the next steps is May 30th is the end of the comment period. From there, we will take all the comments that we received through these public meetings, all the written comments that came in, a lot of agencies will also provide us different comments, and we'll basically just go through all of them.

We do look at all of them, we do read all of them. We try to then, in our final document, respond to all of them. There will be a section in there that is just a response to all the comments that we received.

And where new information has been brought up, or something we hadn't considered, then we go back to the drawing board and we look at our analysis and we decide -- you know, we look at the new information and we decide what may or may not need to be changed, based off of that.

And so, the goal at this point, as far as our timeline, is that we would finish this final EIS by this November. And then what happens after you initiate an EIS is the agency with the action has to issue a record of decision, and that will be our agency's decision

on what we're going to do, and it will be based off of the analysis in this NEPA document, as well as all of the other environmental consultations that we do, as well as a host of other information that's put before our director. And that record of decision is expected in December of this year.

Again, I already mentioned, we have close of the comment period. Mr. Bennett's going to come up and just lay out how we're going to move to the next step of this public meeting, as far as collecting your comments, but I do want to point out, we do have an e-mail address up there where additional comments can always be e-mailed to.

We also have a website for this document, and there's information on the website that gives you background fact sheets on geological and geophysical surveys. It shows you the applications from oil and gas that we've received to date. There's a lot of great information up there.

But do, if you're going to have comments beyond what you provide today, do make sure you get it in by the close of that comment

period on May 30th.

Okay. And with that, I think I'll turn it back over to Mr. Bennett.

MR. BENNETT: Thank you, Jill. Okay. We're going to take comments now. I want to thank you, Jill, and I want to again mention to everybody, if you have questions about the information that was provided, we'll be happy to talk with you, particularly after we close out the comments. But we do want to give the opportunity for people to make public comment.

I only have a couple of people signed up right now, and the way we'll work this is we'll call on those folks, those two people, and then we'll open up the floor afterwards for people to make additional comments.

Normally we ask folks to self-police at three minutes or so for comments, but I don't think we're going to have too much of a problem here with the volume of comments, so I don't think that's an issue. And again, we'll allow time afterwards to speak further, if need be.

I do want to note that what is of most value to us is comments on the draft environmental impact statement, so that we can

assure that we have the best available information to provide to decision-makers. And I'd also ask you to please address your comments here to the panel.

And with that, we can start with John A. Nichols.

MR. NICHOLS: My name is John Nichols. I live in Middletown, Delaware, and I'm here in support, in favor of the seismic studies offshore. As everyone in this room is aware, we have an energy -- we have energy issues in this country. Absent this type of study, we're not going to be able -- be able to even identify what the potential solutions are. This is not going to take place until 2018.

It's a beginning point. I'd also ask that any standards that are applied to oil and gas also apply equally to the renewable industry as it pertains to the study and any mitigation proposals that would be put forth.

To the extent that any studies are conducted by the Federal government, I would ask that any of those -- for offshore wind, that I -- that those costs be borne by the industry directly; that we as a taxpayer aren't paying for

them.

Currently, wind and solar amount to an infinitesimal amount of energy in this country. This offshore wind proposal to site turbines out there has its own environmental impact. We should be studying that, as well.

Wind right now is subsidized 100 times more than fossil fuels, and these are direct pass-through subsidies. My concern is that by siting -- by developing these programs to site offshore wind, we, the citizens of the state and the country, are going to have to continue to subsidize what is a very inefficient source of energy.

So, frankly, in my opinion, we could just eliminate the studies for the offshore wind. It is a waste of money. Thank you.

MR. BENNETT: Thank you. Amy Rowe.

MS. ROWE: Hello, my name is Amy Rowe. I live in Newark, Delaware. I have a Ph.D. in energy and environmental policy. My area of expertise is migratory fish, migratory marine fish, and I am making a statement today on behalf of the Delaware chapter of the Sierra Club. I serve as the conservation chair for the

Delaware chapter of the Sierra Club, and I have reviewed the environmental impact assessment draft.

The Delaware chapter of the Sierra Club opposes high-intensity seismic exploration of the Atlantic Continental Shelf, and we oppose that for several reasons. This action would place the nation as a whole, the state of Delaware, and the Atlantic aquatic biodiversity at risk. It's a risk that we believe is too dangerous to take.

We are at a crossroads in our nation's energy policy, and we have tremendous opportunities to develop renewable energy sources that can provide energy to our nation without the devastating impacts and climate impacts of fossil fuels.

Pardon me?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Nothing.

MR. BENNETT: Please.

MS. ROWE: Thank you. Pursuit of the nation's resources of offshore oil and gas exploration diverts us from the needed task at hand.

Climate change poses a serious risk

to Delaware. We have miles of coastline and large expanses of low-lying areas, and Delaware is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

The nation's continued commitment to developing renewable energy resources places the state -- developing offshore wind resources -- or offshore oil and gas resources, places the state of Delaware at a disproportionate risk to climate change and sea level rise.

The lessons from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill two years ago should provide caution in the development of offshore oil and gas. Delaware's coastal and aquatic resources provide tremendous value to the state, which would be harmed in the case of an oil spill. And Deepwater Horizon has proven the risks of such activities.

The high-intensity seismic testing itself places wildlife at risk. The draft PEIS claims that these risks are moderate, minor, or negligible, though we disagree.

Acoustic pollution has been demonstrated in peer-reviewed and scientific literature to cause significant and detrimental

impacts to aquatic life. The greatest amount of wildlife depends on the Continental Shelves for foraging, habitat, and reproduction, on earth, and acoustic and seismic testing places not only endangered species, such as whales and sea turtles, directly at risk with noise pollution, but it also threatens the multitude of species which aquatic life depends upon.

So we, the Delaware chapter of the Sierra Club, ask the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to protect the state of Delaware and the marine environment by prohibiting acoustic seismic testing and offshore oil and gas development on the Atlantic Continental Shelf. Thank you.

MR. BENNETT: Thank you. Okay. That's all we have signed up. Did anyone -- is anyone here who wants to speak that is not signed up and wants the opportunity to speak? Could you make sure you state your name clearly for the reporter.

MR. PFEISTER: So my name is Doug Pfeister, P-f-e-i-s-t-e-r. I'm with the Offshore Wind Development Coalition. And I just wanted to make two points. Actually, a point and a

question. And I just wanted to emphasize the significant differences between offshore wind and offshore renewable energy, as compared with offshore oil and gas.

Offshore renewable energy is a clean energy source. We just use the wind, in the case of offshore wind, to produce the electricity, and the wind resource is actually quite high offshore, as well.

And not only is the wind resource high, there is a huge resource out there in terms of area, in terms of the OCS, that can be -- where offshore turbines can be placed and generate a lot of electricity. A lot of electricity.

So, I want to emphasize those differences. They are important. The resource is quite large on the OCS for offshore wind.

And then I guess my question is, or -- I don't know, are you taking questions, or are you just taking comments?

MR. BENNETT: We can provide a clarification point of fact, if you have that sort of a question.

MR. PFEISTER: Okay. I just wanted

to compare the document, and I haven't gone through it extensively, with the final EA that came out for the Mid-Atlantic -- for the Mid-Atlantic wind energy areas on the site survey work that would be going on there.

So I wanted to -- if you could respond to that, that would be great. If you could talk about the comparisons between the two documents. If you can't, that's just something I would like to flag, that those two documents, unless there's good reason, should be consistent with one another.

MR. BENNETT: Okay. Well, we can take that as a comment. I think it's a more involved conversation than we have in this forum, but we'll be happy to talk with you afterwards.

MR. PFEISTER: Okay. Thank you.

MR. BENNETT: Is there anyone else who has not had an opportunity to speak that would like to do so? If not, is there anyone that wants to say anything more with regard to their comments? Yes?

MR. NICHOLS: Yeah. I'd like to address the wind energy issue.

MR. BENNETT: And he's John Nichols.

MR. NICHOLS: Specifically again -- it's John Nichols. Two years ago the State of Texas, which has the most installed wind capacity of any state in the United States, had a record demand during a particularly hot summer day.

They have 10,000 megawatts of installed wind. During that particularly hot summer day, they got exactly 5 percent of the wind energy, from the state the size of Texas, in order to meet consumer demand during that peak demand day. That's 500 megawatts of the installed 10,000.

Wind is a waste of money. And the reason it's a waste of money is because of meteorological events, these high pressure systems that cover Texas, which shut down wind turbines, in an area larger than the area we're looking at with respect to development of offshore wind potential. Shut it down. The same thing is going to happen on the Atlantic coast. It will shut it down, from Florida to Maine.

Any expenditure of monies on offshore wind is a waste of money. 30 percent average capacity, 5 percent peak demand. And these are global numbers.

We should not be putting any more money into wind. We should not be looking at this as a resource. It is a waste of money. The transmission cost alone will break the bank. In the last year, offshore wind costs have gone up 100 percent.

So I am opposed to development of the Outer Continental Shelf for offshore wind. I am supportive of oil and gas. It's a dense energy resource. The cost per unit of energy is substantially less. It's the only use that our Offshore Continental Shelf should be put to.

Thank you very much.

MR. BENNETT: Thank you. Is there anyone else who wants to expand their comments?

MR. PFEISTER: I'd be happy to respond to that, unless you feel that it's --

MR. BENNETT: Well, no. We're not asking you to respond. If you have an additional comment to make to the panel for the purposes of this public hearing, we'll be happy to hear it.

MR. PFEISTER: Okay. I'd like to make an additional comment then.

MR. BENNETT: All right.

MR. PFEISTER: Again, this is Doug

Pfeister with the Offshore Wind Development Coalition. I'll just speak to offshore wind. I don't know land-based wind as well as I know offshore wind.

And the point that this gentleman just made, it's very different for offshore wind, because of how the wind blows offshore. In fact, as demand goes up during the day for electricity, so does the wind resource offshore.

I can't speak to other geographic areas in the United States, especially those on land, but offshore specifically, the wind goes up as demand for electricity goes up. So, that's the sole point I'd like to make about offshore wind and demand.

MR. BENNETT: Okay. Thank you for your comments. Is there anyone else who would like to expand their comments? If not, we are adjourned.

Thank you very much for your comments. We appreciate you being here. And I want to remind everyone that the comment period is open until May 30th. Even if you haven't had an opportunity to provide the comments verbally here, please feel free to get us comments, either

by snail mail or via the web. We appreciate it.

We are adjourned. Thank you.

(Hearing concluded at 1:38 p.m.)

I N D E X

REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

I, JULIANNE LaBADIA, Registered Diplomate Reporter and Notary Public, do hereby certify that the foregoing record, pages 1 through 35 inclusive, is a true and accurate transcript of my stenographic notes taken on April 26, 2012, in the above-captioned matter.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 27th day of April, 2012, at Wilmington.

Julianne LaBadia, RDR, CRR

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