

The NewsRoom

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Salazar Announces MMS Plan to Establish Atlantic Renewable Energy Office

COPENHAGEN - Today, as he toured the Middelgrunden wind farm near Copenhagen Denmark, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar announced that the Minerals Management Service (MMS) will establish a new regional office in 2010 to support renewable energy development on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) off the Atlantic seaboard.

“Given the enormous potential for renewable energy development, especially wind energy, in the Mid- and North Atlantic,” Secretary Salazar said, “MMS needs a dedicated Atlantic Region office as we plan for offshore renewable energy commercial leasing.”

The Atlantic OCS Region will be responsible for evaluating permits for renewable energy activities in an effective, efficient, and consistent manner while being responsive to the States, developers and other stakeholders.

The new office will implement and manage the offshore renewable energy program, including leasing, environmental programs, the formation of task forces, State consultation, and post-lease permitting in Federal waters off the East Coast.

In these first months of the Obama Administration, the Department of the Interior created the first-ever framework for offshore renewable energy development and worked with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to clear out bureaucratic obstacles to offshore renewable energy projects. The Secretary recently awarded the first-ever exploratory leases for offshore wind production on the OCS offshore New Jersey and Delaware.

At the state level, the governors of Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware have signed a Memorandum of Understanding creating a formal partnership to generate clean, renewable energy and a sustainable market. Immediate tasks under the agreement include identifying common transmission strategies for offshore wind energy deployment in the region, discuss ways to encourage sustainable market demand for this renewable resource and work collaboratively in pursuing federal energy policies which help advance offshore wind in the Mid-Atlantic area.

Secretary Salazar is attending the global climate change conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, this week. On Thursday, he will deliver a keynote speech on Interior’s efforts to build a clean energy economy and to confront the impacts of climate change.

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