

## The NewsRoom

### Release:

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## MMS and Rhode Island Hold Offshore Renewable Energy Task Force Meeting

**NARRAGANSETT, RI** – Today the Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) held its first meeting with officials from Rhode Island to discuss renewable energy development on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). The MMS is establishing inter-governmental task forces to consult with states concerning renewable energy leasing and development on the OCS.

Governor Donald L. Carcieri designated Grover Fugate, Executive Director of the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC), as well as Brian A. Goldman, CRMC Legal Counsel, to work with the MMS to establish the Rhode Island task force. This task force includes Rhode Island government officials, affected federal agencies, elected local government officials, and tribal leaders. MMS will work with the task force to facilitate the commercial leasing process for OCS renewable energy development in areas offshore Rhode Island.

"The MMS Rhode Island Task Force will provide a forum for the efficient and effective review of proposed renewable energy projects on the OCS to support the Administration's goal of expanding our nation's energy resource portfolio in a manner that is environmentally sound and is responsive to the needs of affected states, localities, and tribes," said MMS Director Liz Birnbaum. "Rhode Island has taken a strong leadership role in this area, and MMS looks forward to the input, advice, and participation of this task force as we initiate planning for commercial renewable energy leasing offshore Rhode Island."

"The Coastal Resources Management Council, as the state agency that will oversee the eventual development of offshore renewable energy in Rhode Island, is looking forward to working with the MMS on the state task force," said CRMC Chairman Michael M. Tikoian. "This task force will not only serve as a venue for review of future projects, but our work as members will also complement the development of the CRMC's Ocean Special Area Management Plan, currently underway."

During the first MMS Rhode Island task force meeting, held at the University of Rhode Island, the MMS presented and discussed the task force charter with the task force members. MMS officials explained the leasing process for OCS renewable energy and discussed options for initiating the process off Rhode Island. The task force participants discussed specific actions and timelines required by MMS and the state to support Rhode Island's goal of developing offshore renewable energy.

In April 2009, President Barack Obama announced that the MMS finalized the framework for renewable energy development on the OCS. This framework establishes the process for granting leases, easements, and rights-of-way for offshore renewable energy development activities, such as the siting and construction of wind generation facilities on the OCS. The framework also provides for MMS to use task forces in carrying out its responsibilities for authorizing OCS renewable energy activities in partnership with state, local, and tribal governments, and Federal agencies. A task force meeting was recently held with Delaware, and task forces are also being formed for Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Virginia.

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