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## **BOEMRE Begins Work on First Geological and Geophysical Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the Mid and South Atlantic**

**WASHINGTON** – The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE) today announced it has begun work to develop the first Geological and Geophysical (G&G) Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for areas in the mid and south Atlantic. The PEIS will evaluate potential environmental effects of multiple G&G activities, such as seismic surveys, that will be conducted to inform future decisions regarding oil, natural gas and renewable energy development on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) in the mid- and south Atlantic planning areas.

“This work will enable us to carefully and responsibly identify the resources that meet our nation’s energy needs while protecting the Atlantic and its coastal communities,” said BOEMRE Director Michael R. Bromwich. “It is an important part of our comprehensive approach to energy development that relates to oil and gas, as well as offshore wind.”

On December 1, 2010, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar announced an updated strategy for energy development on the OCS that included G&G studies in the mid- and south Atlantic planning areas (<http://www.doi.gov/news/pressreleases/Salazar-Announces-Revised-OCS-Leasing-Program.cfm>). Seismic data is used by industry and BOEMRE to evaluate the potential for the safe development of offshore oil, natural gas and non-energy mineral resources like sand and gravel. The data is also used for decision making regarding the placement of offshore renewable energy infrastructure, such as siting of wind turbines, and to identify and protect benthic and archaeological resources and ensure a fair market value return for U.S. taxpayers for energy resources developed on the OCS.

The PEIS will identify potential environmental effects and inform decision makers and the public of reasonable alternatives to avoid or minimize adverse impacts. The analyses will also support BOEMRE environmental compliance efforts with other applicable laws, such as the Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, National Historic Preservation Act, and the Coastal Zone Management Act.

BOEMRE held 13 public scoping meetings in seven locations to solicit comments for the development of the PEIS in mid 2010. The bureau today awarded a task order to Continental Shelf Associates to develop the PEIS. The draft PEIS will be made available for public comment in 2011. The final PEIS is expected to be completed in late 2012.

More information about the Atlantic G&G PEIS is available at: <http://www.gomr.boemre.gov/homepg/offshore/atlocs/gandg.html>.

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