



Overview of the Environmental Assessment for Commercial Wind Lease Issuance and Site Assessment Activities Offshore North Carolina

February 9-12, 2015
Kitty Hawk, Wilmington, Carolina Shores
North Carolina

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Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

Outline

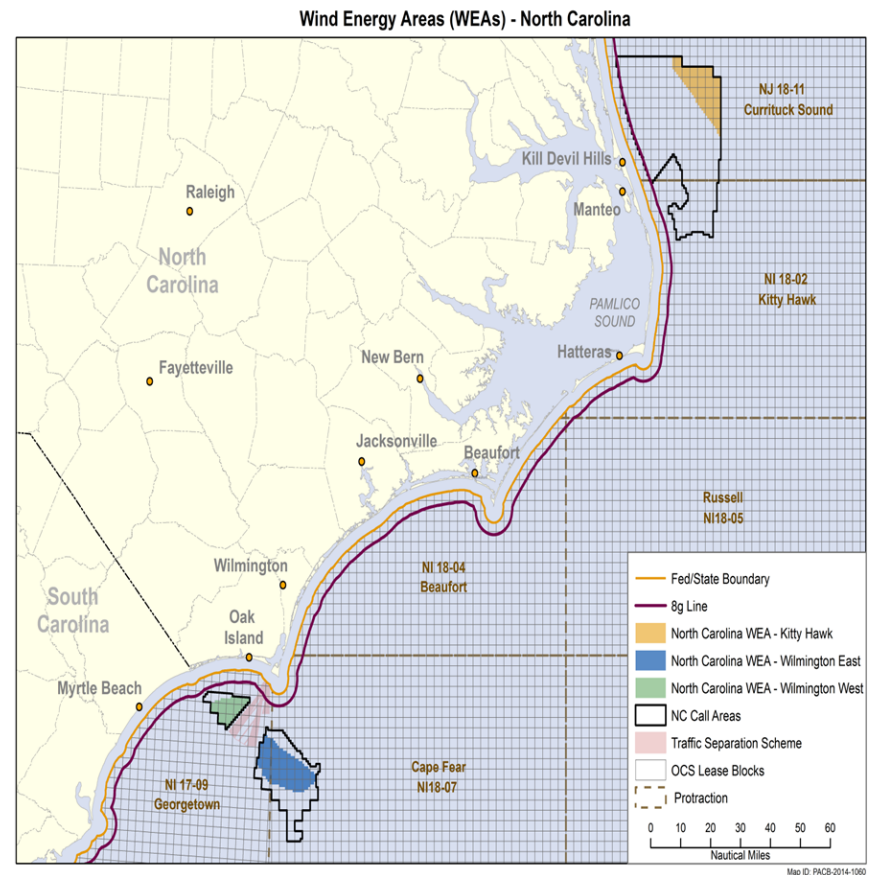
- NEPA Background
- Overview of the Environmental Assessment (EA)
 - Proposed Action and Alternatives
 - Impact Producing Factors and Activities
 - Resources Considered
 - Standard Operating Conditions
 - Consultations
- Next Steps and How to Comment

National Environmental Policy Act

- The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was established by Congress in 1969.
- Two primary purposes of NEPA:
 - Informed decisions
 - Public involvement
- An EA is a concise public document which:
 - Briefly provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS);
 - Aids an agency's compliance with NEPA when no EIS is necessary, i.e., it helps to identify better alternatives and mitigation measures; and
 - Facilitates preparation of an EIS when one is necessary.

Proposed Action (Alternative A)

- Lease issuance of all three Wind Energy Areas (WEAs)
- Associated site characterization surveys (e.g., shallow hazards, geological, geotechnical, archaeological, and biological surveys)
- Subsequent site assessment activities (e.g., construction and operation of meteorological towers and/or buoys)



Alternatives Considered

Alternative B	Removal of Wilmington West WEA due to migrating North Atlantic right whales
Alternative C	Prohibits high resolution geological and geophysical survey activities from November 1 - April 30 due to migration patterns of North Atlantic right whales
Alternative D	No action

Impact Producing Factors

- Vessel Traffic
- Noise (Pile Driving, Surveys)
- Vessel Collisions/Allisions
- Bottom Disturbance
- Emissions and Discharges
- Lighting
- Severe Storms
- Visual and Aesthetic Interference



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

Standard Operating Conditions

- Appendix B of the EA
- Based on previous and ongoing consultations with NOAA NMFS and FWS
- Part of the proposed action or “in place”
- Developed to reduce or eliminate the potential for environmental risks
- Enforced through lease stipulations or terms and conditions of plan approval

Consultations

- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)
- Endangered Species Act (ESA)
- Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Essential Fish Habitat (EFH))



Next Steps

Based on the nature and extent of comments received, we may:

- Publish a Finding No Significant Impacts (FONSI);
- Revise the EA; or
- Determine that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required.



How to Comment

- Comment period closes February 23, 2015
- On www.regulations.gov use Keyword:
BOEM-2015-0001
- In written form either by hand or mail:

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Questions?

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