



Bureau of Ocean Energy Management – Alaska Region Now Accepting Environmental Study Ideas for Fiscal Year 2026–2027

Deadline: December 13, 2024

Introduction

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) is responsible for managing the development of energy, mineral, and geological resources in an environmentally and economically responsible way on the United States Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). BOEM’s Alaska Region oversees the development of Alaska’s OCS oil and natural gas, renewable energy, and marine mineral resources. Encompassing the Beaufort, Chukchi, and Bering seas, Cook Inlet, and the Gulf of Alaska, Alaska’s OCS extends between 3 nautical miles (nm) to 200 nm offshore, and includes more than one billion acres adjacent to more than 6,000 miles of coastline.

BOEM’s [Environmental Studies Program](#) (ESP) develops, funds, and manages scientific research designed to inform decisions on the exploration and development of OCS energy and mineral resources. Environmental and sociocultural research provide BOEM relevant and defensible data to assess, predict, monitor, and mitigate potential environmental and sociocultural impacts of the activities it authorizes.

Over the past five decades, BOEM has funded more than \$465 million on research in Alaska covering topics in physical, chemical, and biological oceanography; fisheries and wildlife ecology; and sociocultural science and economics. BOEM-supported research has improved the understanding of properties, movement, degradation and effects of potential oil spills into water and ice environments; distribution, abundance, foraging ecology, and behavior of marine mammals and migratory birds; effects of a warming climate on nearshore and offshore ecosystems; properties and changes in nearshore, landfast, and offshore ice; and perspectives of Alaska Native peoples on cultural, traditional, and nutritional resources dependent on the Alaska OCS.

Request for Research Ideas

BOEM is beginning to formulate its Fiscal Year 2026–2027 Studies Development Plan covering all BOEM energy and minerals activities for the Alaska, Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Pacific OCS.

To support this process, the BOEM Alaska Region invites you to submit study ideas for consideration in the areas of biological, oceanographic (physical and chemical), and social sciences (including economic and cultural research) and Indigenous Knowledge for the Alaska OCS and adjacent coastal areas. The Alaska Region is specifically interested in studies related to affected resources, monitoring, compliance, and cumulative effects of renewable energy development. Of particular interest to BOEM are offshore wind and tidal technologies. Further, we have identified the following research priorities:

Interdependent Physical, Biological, and Social Processes

- Assess the effects of climate change on the environment, marine ecosystem functions, and social systems.
- Characterize carbonate chemistry conditions and the response of marine organisms to assess the potential for estuarine, coastal, or ocean acidification and impacts on biological resources.

Alaska Native Culture, Subsistence, and Socioeconomics

- Describe coastal and marine subsistence and Indigenous Knowledge of Alaska Native Peoples.

Physical Oceanography, Sea Ice, and Fate and Effects of Pollutants

- Enhance prediction of the fate and weathering of oil spills from renewable and conventional energy projects in open water and ice conditions.
- Characterize sea ice and processes including interaction with the atmosphere and ocean.
- Enhance knowledge of the physics controlling regional circulation and oceanographic features.

Biological Resources (Birds, Fish, Lower Trophic Levels, Essential Fish Habitat, Marine Mammals, and Protected Species)

- Detect and quantify natural versus anthropogenic impacts in estuarine and marine ecosystems.
- Identify important habitat, residence time, and migration corridors for biological resources. Especially during understudied temporal periods (e.g., late fall, winter, and early spring).
- Understand the influence of noise from BOEM-related activities on the health, behavior, distribution, and relative abundance of marine biota.
- Quantify the effect of vessel traffic, noise, and collision risk for biological resources (special focus on Endangered Species Act listed and protected species).

I encourage you to review BOEM's [National Studies List for Fiscal Year 2025](#), which identifies studies BOEM intends to procure, subject to availability of funds. You can find the current Studies Development Plan online at [2025–2026 BOEM National Studies Plan](#) which lists the criteria for study development and approval. Additionally, reports from completed studies are accessible on [GovInfo](#). Please carefully consider [BOEM's ESP Strategic Framework](#) – particularly the criteria and questions – when formulating your study ideas. Proposed studies are evaluated for program relevance, programmatic timeliness, and scientific merit.

Please note that all submissions become the property of the federal government. Study ideas will be reviewed by BOEM's Alaska Region. Based on merit, ideas may be considered, modified, or not considered for potential funding. A research idea that is accepted for further development **does not imply** that the author, or an institution, will receive funding but **may have the opportunity to compete** for funding.

Format

Send your suggestions in a short paragraph via email to: Alaska.Studies@boem.gov by **December 6, 2024**. Please include an explanation of why BOEM should consider funding the study (see: [BOEM's ESP Strategic Framework](#)).

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