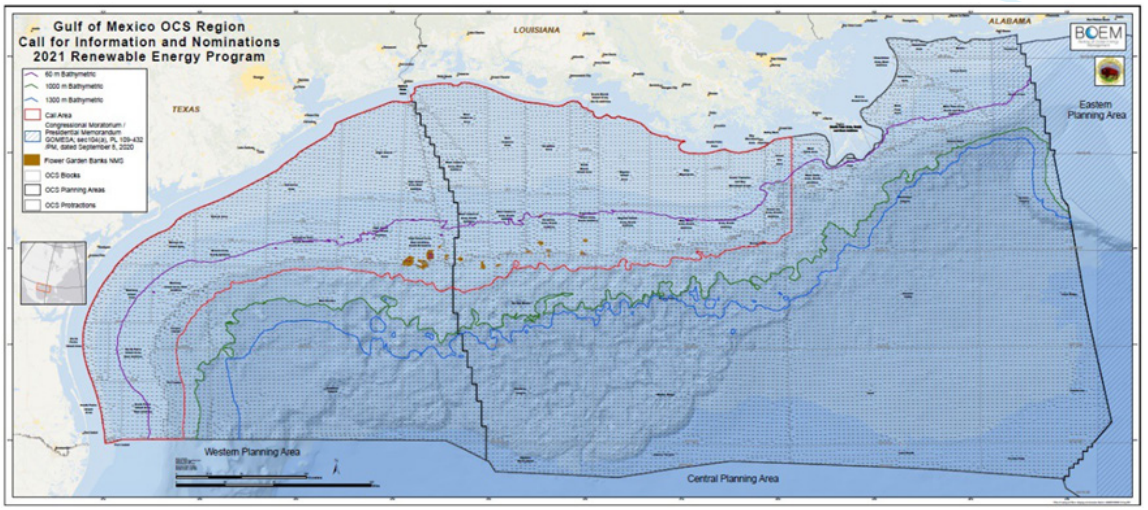
BOEM
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

Offshore Wind Siting in the Gulf of Mexico
Fact Sheet

Where could wind energy development occur in the Gulf of Mexico?



You can find the Wind Call Area details here: https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/state- activities/gulf-mexico-activities.

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) is relying on input from industry, state and federal partners, the Gulf of Mexico (GOM) Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force, stakeholders, and the public to inform a decision on what areas should be made available for wind leasing. In late 2021, BOEM published a Call for Information and Nominations (Call) to request information from the public and determine industry interest in commercial offshore wind energy development in the GOM. The Call Area is intentionally broad to afford flexibility in decision-making process and will likely be narrowed in later stages. The Call Area includes the area located seaward of the GOM's Submerged Lands Act boundary, bounded on the east by the north-south line located at 89.858° W longitude, and bounded on the south by the 400-meter bathymetry contour and the United States-Mexico maritime boundary established by the Treaty between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the United Mexican States on the Delimitation of the Continental Shelf in the Western GOM beyond 200 Nautical Miles.

How will BOEM consider other uses of the GOM during the offshore wind development process?

Throughout the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and at multiple stages, BOEM evaluates past, existing, and likely future uses of the coastal and ocean environment for multiple-use conflicts and other potential impacts. This includes identifying and balancing impacts to other users of the GOM, such as commercial and recreational fisheries; military activities; vessel traffic; and oil and gas development.

BOEM is partnering with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) to adapt their Aquaculture Opportunity Areas Atlas tool for offshore wind siting in the GOM. This marine spatial planning tool will include up to date ocean user data and will assist BOEM in siting offshore wind energy areas in locations that minimize impacts to sensitive species and habitats, fisheries communities, and other marine industries.

OVER ►

How is BOEM engaging with the fishing community regarding offshore wind energy development?

BOEM engages with the fishing community directly through public comments submitted as part of the NEPA review process and indirectly by working with the Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council and associated advisory panels (e.g., Shrimp Advisory Panel), the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), fishermen's associations, and state- sponsored fisheries task-forces. Fishing is a nationally important industry and an important cultural aspect of coastal communities. BOEM is committed to regularly engaging with commercial and recreational fishermen to ensure we fully understand their concerns – ecological, cultural, and economic.

BOEM understands that wind energy development and the placement of wind turbines can be incompatible with certain types of commercial fishing and BOEM will continue to work with NMFS, industry, state governments, and the fishing community to better understand and address concerns. BOEM will also update and improve engagement practices by incorporating feedback received through our current outreach efforts.

Are there siting/design considerations and mitigations to address potential impacts to navigation and safety?

Yes, to ensure navigational safety all structures will have appropriate markings and lighting in accordance with United States Coast Guard (USCG) requirements for Private Aids to Navigation. Turbine locations will also be charted by the NOAA and may include a physical or virtual automatic identification system at each turbine.

A Navigational Safety Risk Assessment is required the be included in every offshore wind project's Construction and Operations Plan (COP), and is used by the USCG to evaluate the impact of the installation on other marine users and potential for it to interfere with vessels, aircraft, or other authorized users of the air space and the sea surface, water column, or sea bottom prior to approval.

In addition, BOEM can impose restrictions on development or require specific mitigation measures if necessary. As such, BOEM evaluates any recommendations regarding the placement of wind turbines and considers facility design alternatives that reduce potential impacts to navigation and safety through the environmental assessment process. For example, based on input from stakeholders, wind energy facilities along the U.S. Atlantic coast have adopted a uniform 1 x 1 nautical mile grid turbine layout to allow for safe, predictable navigation of vessels through offshore wind farms.