

Appendix Q. Marine Archaeological Resources Assessment

Document Revision B

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SOUTHCOAST WIND MARINE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

This Executive Summary provides the results of Phase I submerged cultural resource analyses and interpretation of high-resolution geophysical (HRG) survey and geotechnical data to support the SouthCoast Wind Energy LLC (SouthCoast Wind) Project (the Project). The Project Wind Energy Area is located within the Commercial Lease of Submerged Lands for Renewable Energy Development on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) (OCS-A 0521) (Lease Area) approximately 48 kilometers (km) (26 nautical miles [nm]) south of Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts and over 37 km (20 nm) from Nantucket. The Lease Area is connected by up to two submarine Export Cable Corridors (ECCs) to landfall locations in Falmouth, Massachusetts and Brayton Point in Somerset, Massachusetts, respectively. The Falmouth ECC begins at the Lease Area in federal waters then travels north along the Muskeget Channel between Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket before turning northwest to the landing in Falmouth, Massachusetts. The Brayton Point ECC begins at the Lease Area in federal waters, traveling northwest then through the Rhode Island Sound, Sakonnet River (with intermediate landfalls on Aquidneck Island), and Mount Hope Bay, reaching landfall at Brayton Point in Somerset, Massachusetts.

The Marine Archaeological Resources Assessment was conducted to assist compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA), as amended, and its implementing regulations 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 800, entitled "Protection of Historic Properties." Under Section 106, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), as the lead federal agency, must consider the effects of the Project to historic properties prior to approving the construction and operation of the proposed facilities. The work was also performed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974, the Abandoned Shipwreck Act of 1988 (43 U.S.C. 2101-2106), Title 36 of the CFR, Parts 60-66 and 800, as appropriate, and with standards set forth in the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation*. Studies within the Lease Area and ECCs were conducted pursuant to BOEM (2020a and 2020b) guidelines for renewable energy projects in federal waters. Survey efforts for the Project ECCs in state waters were coordinated at the state level with Massachusetts Historical Commission, which serves as the Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Office (MA SHPO); the Massachusetts Board of Underwater Archaeological Resources, which assists the MA SHPO in managing submerged cultural

resources in Massachusetts state waters; and The Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, the state agency for historical preservation and heritage programs, which acts as the Rhode Island State Historic Preservation Office (RI SHPO).

SouthCoast Wind conducted site reconnaissance geophysical and geotechnical surveys in 2019 across the Lease Area. The 2019 geophysical campaign supported preparation of the Site Assessment Plan (SAP), specifically the clearance of the meteorological buoy site and the geotechnical sampling locations. SouthCoast Wind continued HRG surveys and geotechnical investigations in 2020 both offshore within the Lease Area and along the Falmouth ECC in federal and Massachusetts waters, which include Muskeget Channel and Nantucket Sound. The HRG surveys provide a summary of the geological and cultural resource conditions that informed SouthCoast Wind's Project Design Envelope (PDE) and support the information requirements for a Construction and Operations Plan. Additional surveys were conducted in 2021 through 2023 to provide complete full coverage of the Lease Area and Falmouth ECC as well as to provide full coverage of the Brayton Point ECC.

The Project HRG campaigns covered approximately 12,992 ha (32,103 ac) of survey transects in the Lease Area, approximately 8,026 ha (19,833 ac) of survey transects along the Falmouth ECC, and approximately 2,848 ha (7,038 ac) of survey transects along the Brayton Point ECC.

All of the preserved paleolandforms discovered have been marked for avoidance with an avoidance buffer derived from a review of seismic profiles and informed by the ground model to ensure that it covers the extent of the potentially preserved features.

The HRG survey data also facilitated the planning of the geotechnical and geoarchaeological investigations, which verified subsurface interpretations and will inform construction plans. The Qualified Marine Archaeologist (QMA) reviewed the HRG survey data acquired within an analytical area established at each proposed geotechnical sampling location to ensure no potential archaeological resources would be impacted by geotechnical investigations.

Although remote sensing surveys conducted in accordance with current professional standards for cultural resource identification are expected to be highly effective at recognizing submerged cultural resources, the possibility of encountering an unidentified and unanticipated submerged cultural resource is always present during dredging and construction activities. Disturbance of the seafloor during construction activities has the potential to encounter and cause significant, long-term, and adverse impacts to unidentified submerged cultural resources. As a result, the Project will continue to develop any necessary mitigation plans and has developed an Unanticipated Discovery Plan (UDP).