



**BOEM** Bureau of  
Ocean Energy Management

# Central Atlantic Wind Auction

*Office of Renewable Energy Programs*

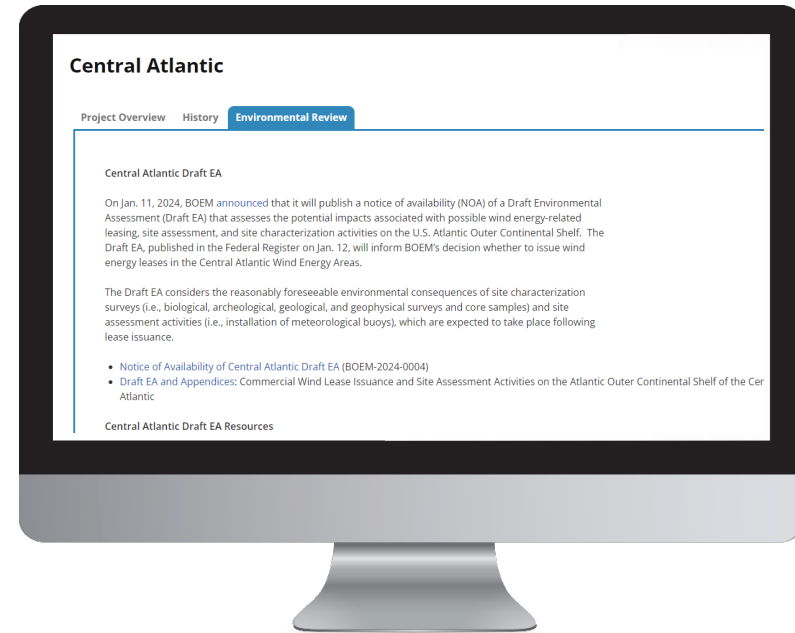
Draft Environmental Assessment Public Meetings  
January 30, and February 1, 2024

# Meeting Agenda

- Welcome and Agenda
- Opening Remarks
- Meeting Logistics
- Central Atlantic History and Process Overview
- Break
- Public Comments
- Break
- Question & Answer Session
- Closing Remarks

**Note:** *This meeting is being recorded and will be posted on BOEM's website here:*

*<https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/state-activities/central-atlantic>*



# **BOEM Opening Remarks**

**Jess Stromberg, Chief**

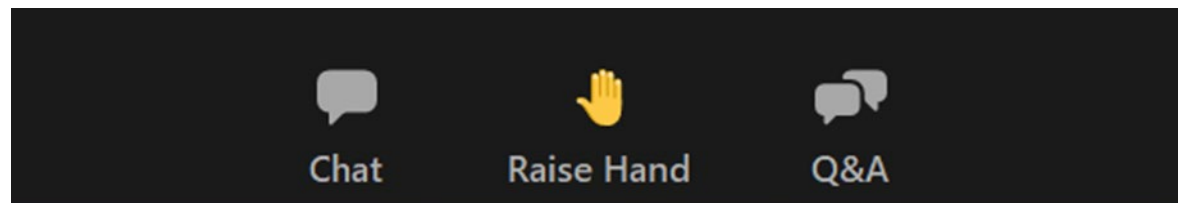
**Environment Branch for Renewable Energy**

**Bureau of Ocean Energy Management**

# Meeting Logistics

# Zoom Platform

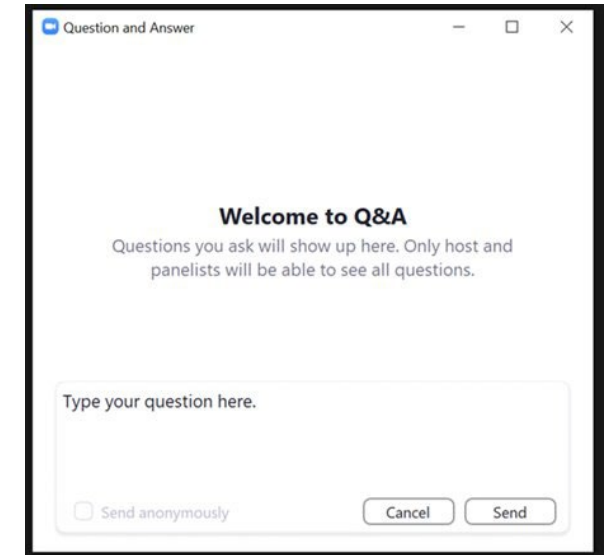
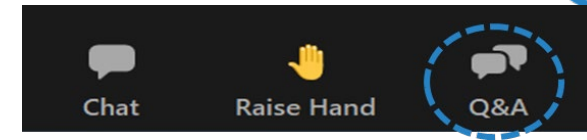
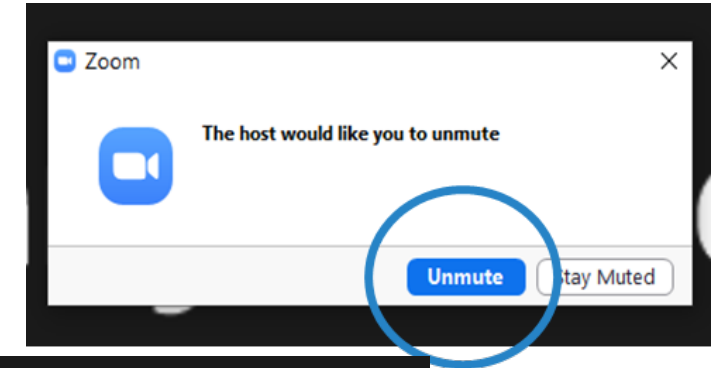
- If you need help with the Zoom platform:
  - Use the chat feature at the bottom of the screen
- To call in to meeting
  - Phone number: 888 788 0099 (Toll Free)
  - Meeting ID: 838 9348 6606
  - Password: 993 464
- Please close all apps and programs and limit other streaming or downloads
- All participants are on mute until the formal comment period





# Comments and Questions

- **Public comment period will follow the presentation**
  - People who pre-registered to comment will go first
  - If you did not pre-register but would like to comment, you can ‘raise your hand’ to be called on
- **Question and Answer session**
  - If you have a question for BOEM, type it in the Q&A box at the bottom of your screen
  - Questions can be typed in the Q&A feature throughout the presentation and listening session
  - Following receipt of public comments, BOEM will respond to any questions that came in through the Q&A box
- **This meeting is being recorded and will be transcribed**
- **Media representatives, please contact John Filostrat**
  - [john.filostrat@boem.gov](mailto:john.filostrat@boem.gov) 504-284-8605



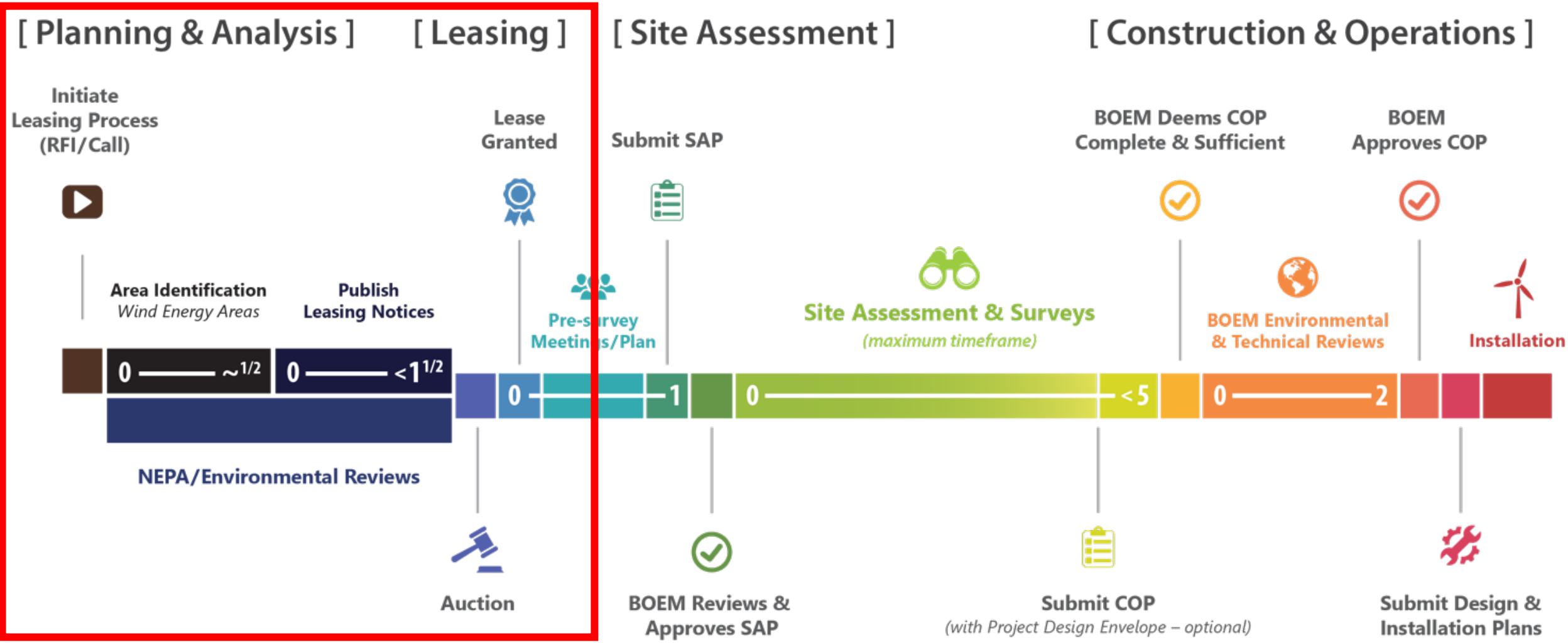
# **Background and Overview**

**Lorena Edenfield**

**NEPA Coordinator**

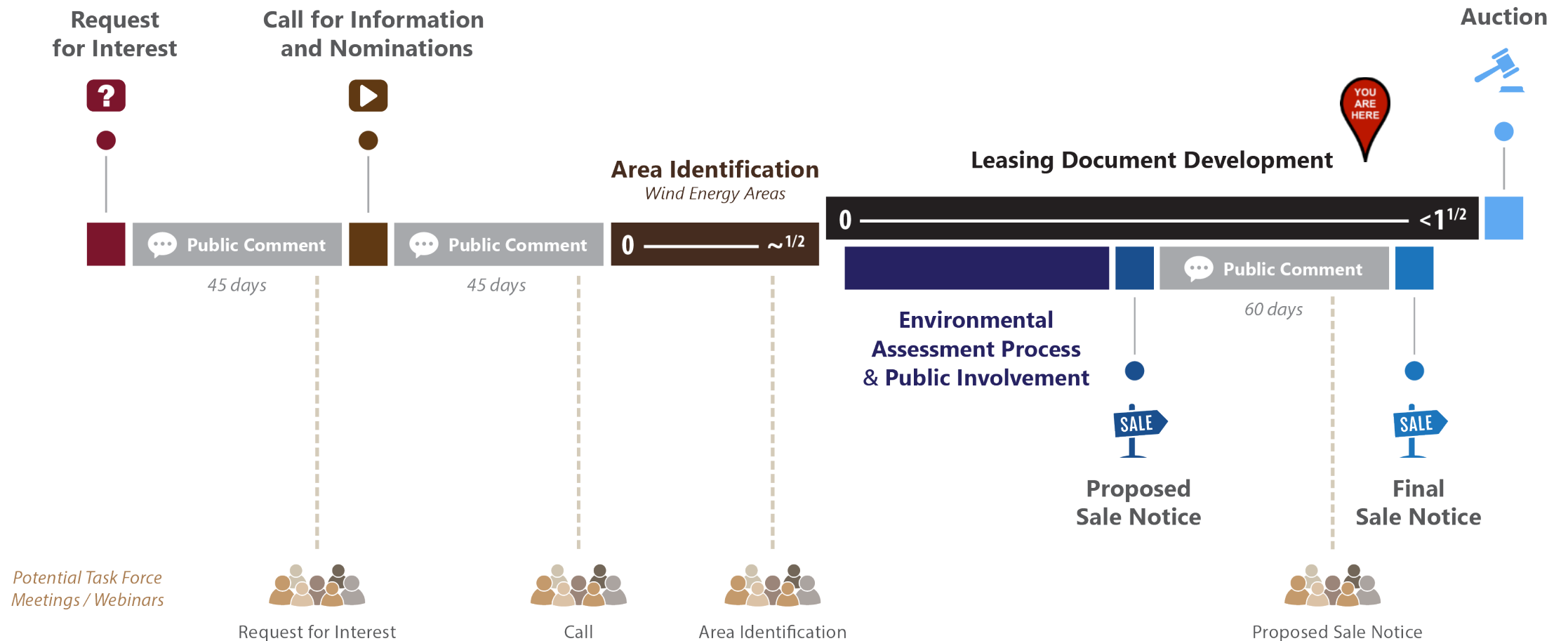
**Bureau of Ocean Energy Management**

# Renewable Energy Process: From RFI/Call to Operation



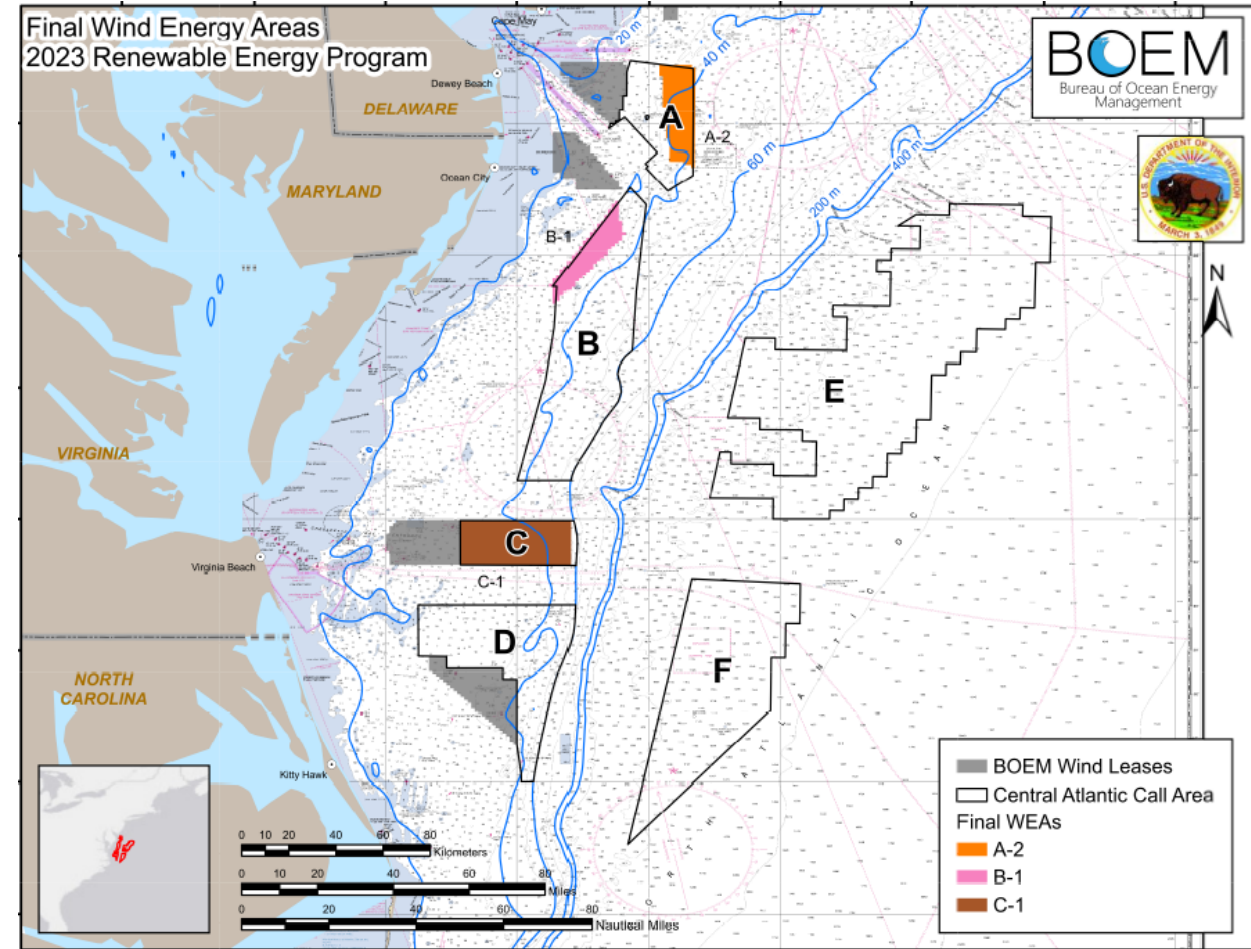


# Request for Interest to Lease Sale

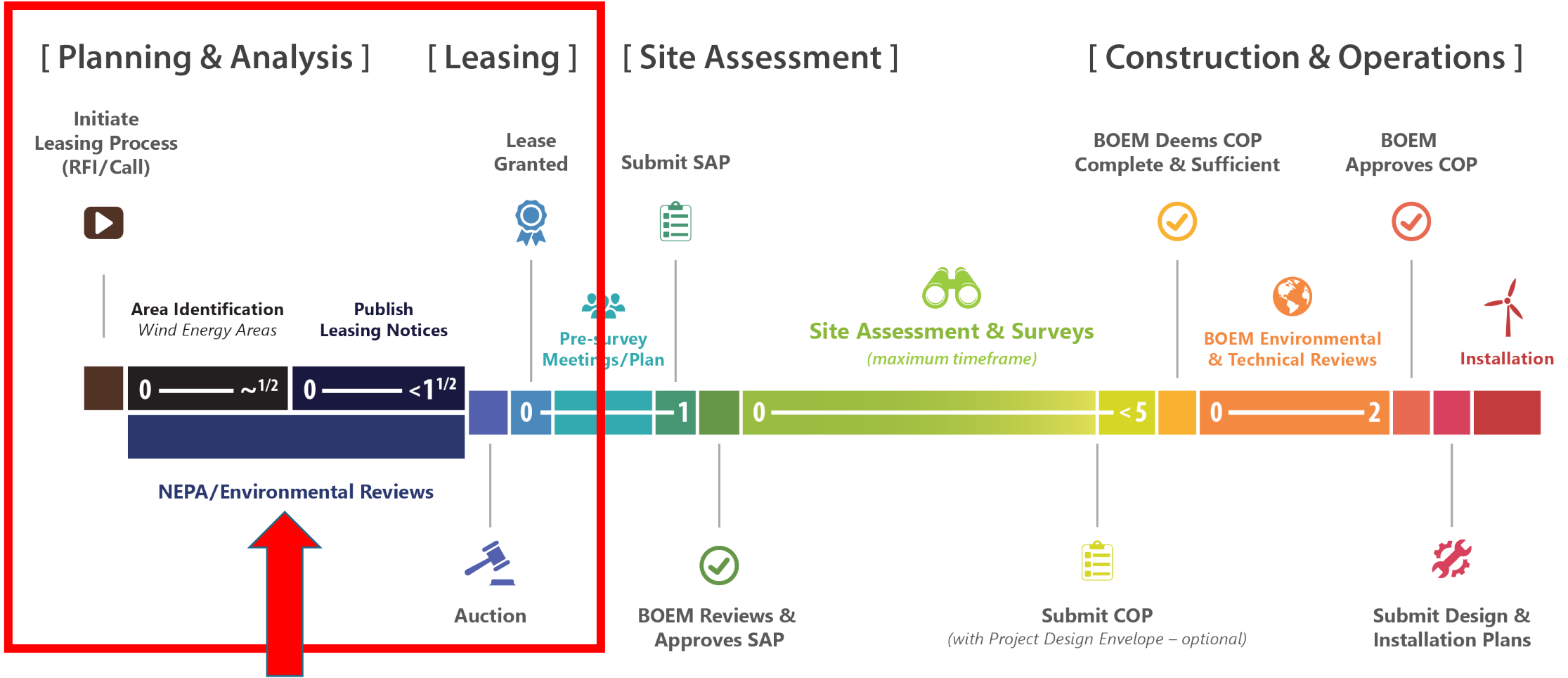


# Central Atlantic Final Wind Energy Areas

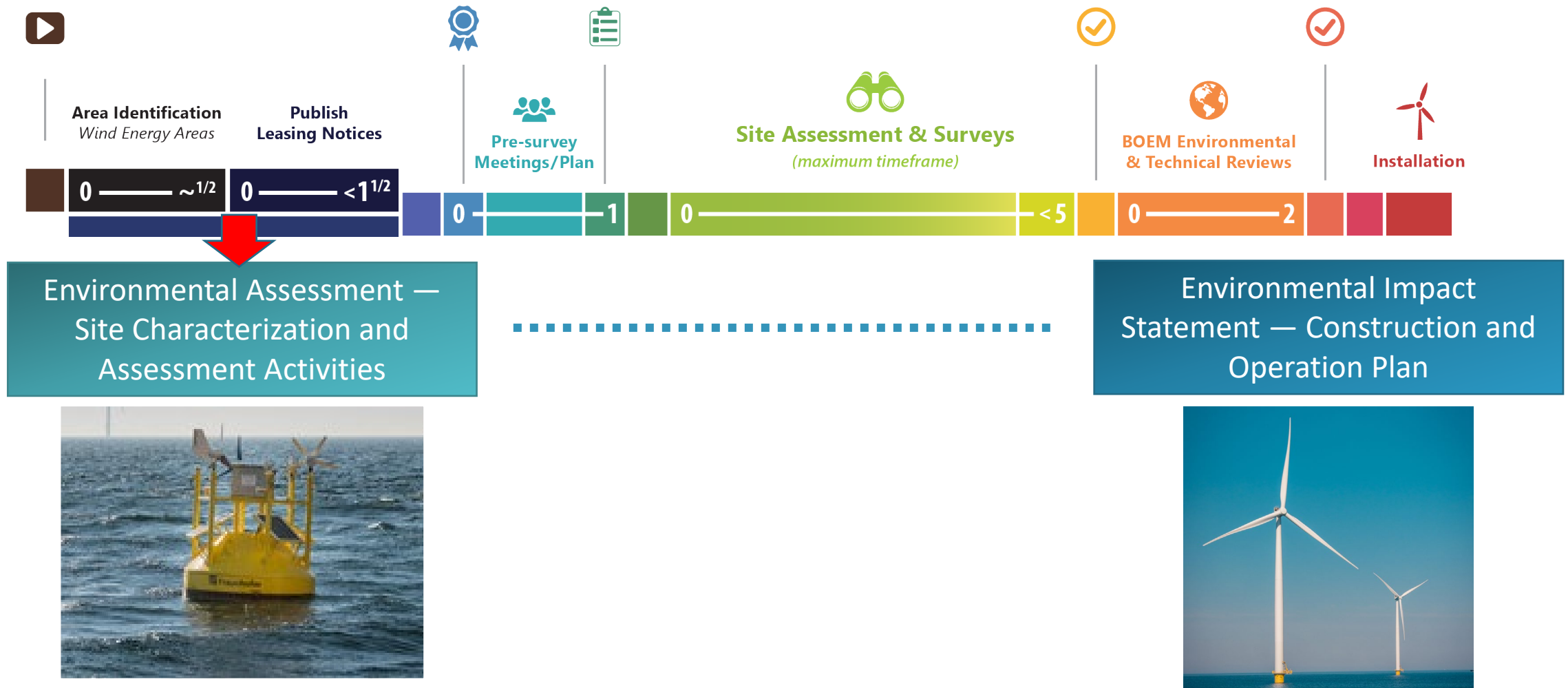
- On April 2, 2022 – BOEM announced the publication of a Call for Information and Nominations to assess commercial interest in, and obtain public input on, potential wind energy leasing in the federal waters in the Central Atlantic
- On November 16, 2022 – BOEM announced 8 draft Wind Energy Areas (WEAs) in the Central Atlantic for public review and comment.
- On July 31, 2023 – BOEM announced 3 final WEAs offshore Delaware, Maryland and Virginia.



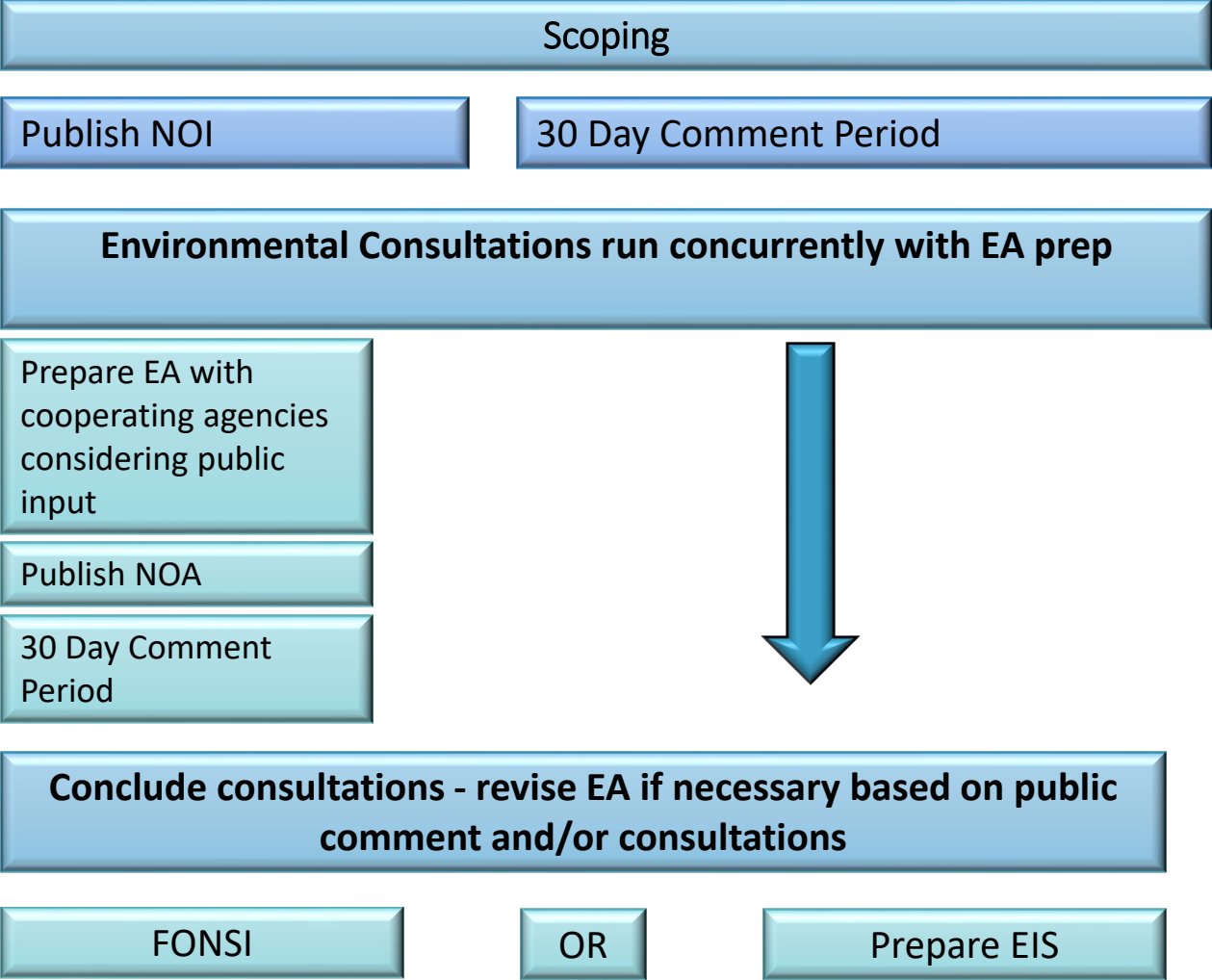
# Renewable Energy Process: From RFI/Call to Operation



# NEPA and Offshore Wind



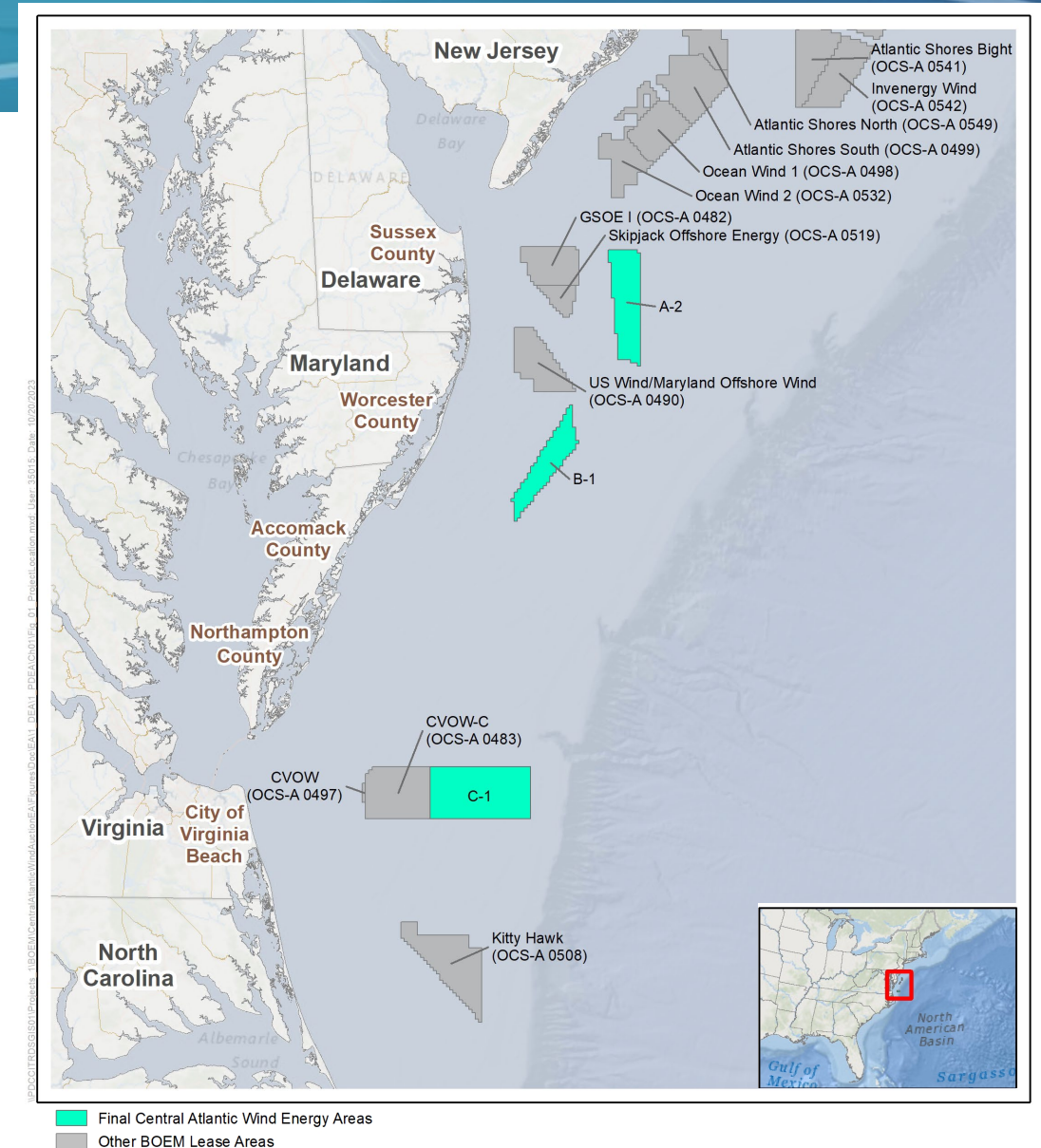
# Overview of NEPA Process for an Environmental Assessment





# Draft Environmental Assessment (EA)

- Geographic scope based on the July 31, 2023, Area ID Memorandum for WEAs in the Central Atlantic
  - Scoping Comment Period ended August 31, 2023
  - Docket No. BOEM-2023-0034
- **Proposed Action:** issuance of leases within the WEAs and grant rights-of-way and rights-of-use and easement
- **Purpose of EA:** determine if the Proposed Action would lead to reasonably foreseeable significant impacts on the environment
  - Builds upon prior EAs completed in the Region

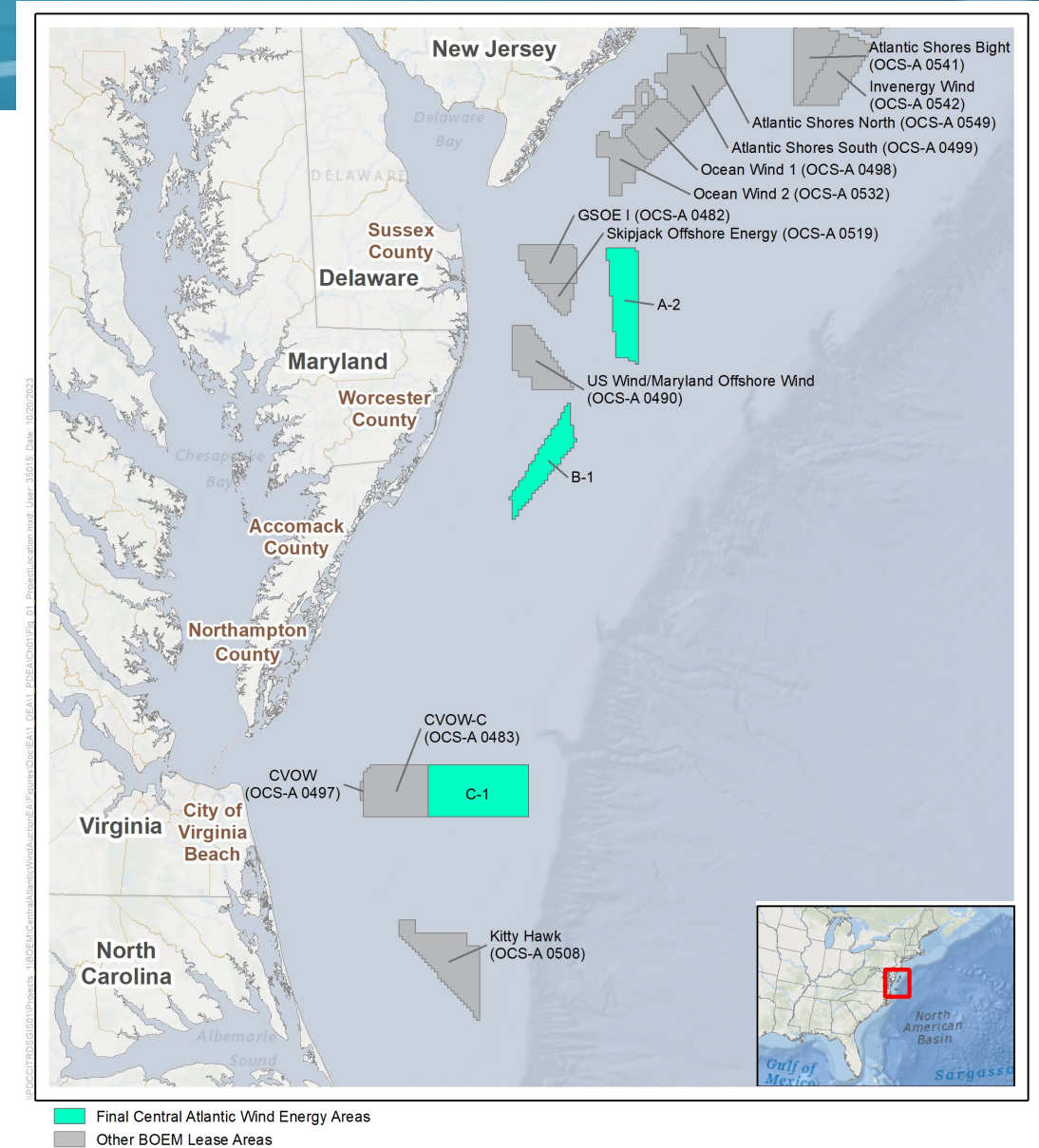


# Central Atlantic Wind Energy Areas

Parameter	A-2	B-1	C-1
Acres	101,769	78,283	176,493
Maximum depth (m)	48	40	148
Minimum depth (m)	27	21	25
Closest distance to DE (nm)	26.4	24.5	87.2
Closest distance to MD (nm)	28.9	18.9	61.1
Closest distance to VA (nm)	43.4	19.0	30.9
Closest distance to NC (nm)	128.3	89.9	35.4

m = meter; nm = nautical mile

**Total Acreage of WEAs is 356,464**



# Purpose and Need for Action

## ○ Issuance of leases and grants:

- Confers exclusive right to submit plans to BOEM for potential development
- Determines suitability for commercial offshore wind production and/or transmission through site characterization and assessment
- Ensures the site characterization and assessment activities are conducted in a safe and environmentally responsible manner

## Scope of Analysis:

- Up to 4 leases that may cover the entirety of the WEAs
- Potential easements associated with each lease and grants for subsea cable corridors and offshore collector/converter platforms

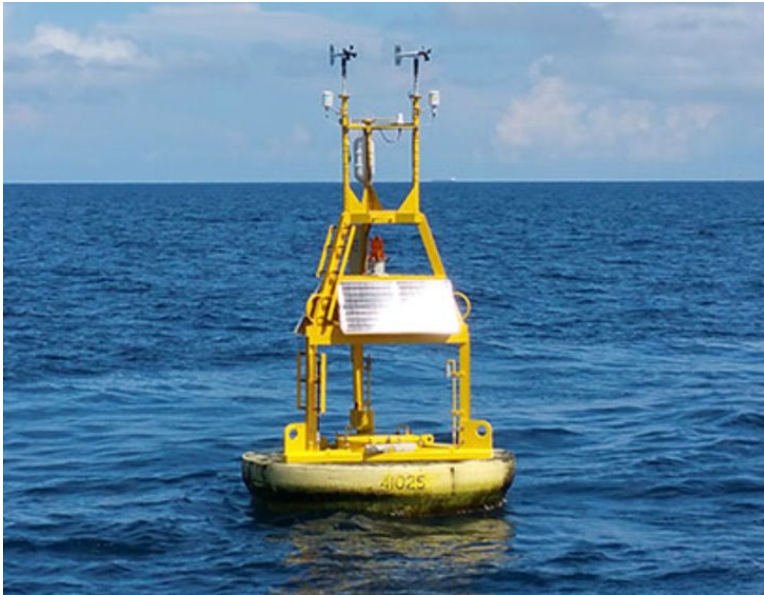




# Activities Analyzed in the Draft EA

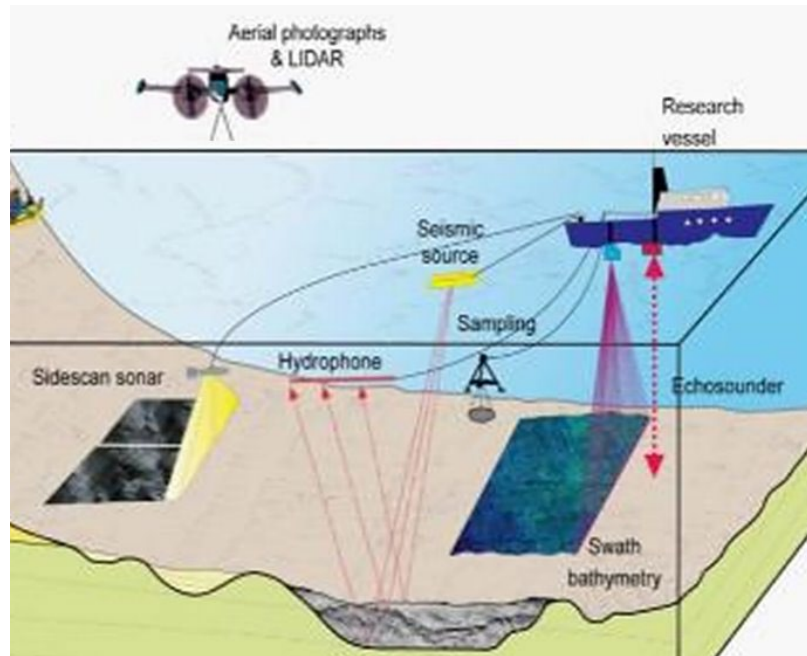
## Site Assessment

Temporary placement of meteorological buoys and oceanographic devices



## Site Characterization

Geophysical, geotechnical, biological, and archaeological surveys

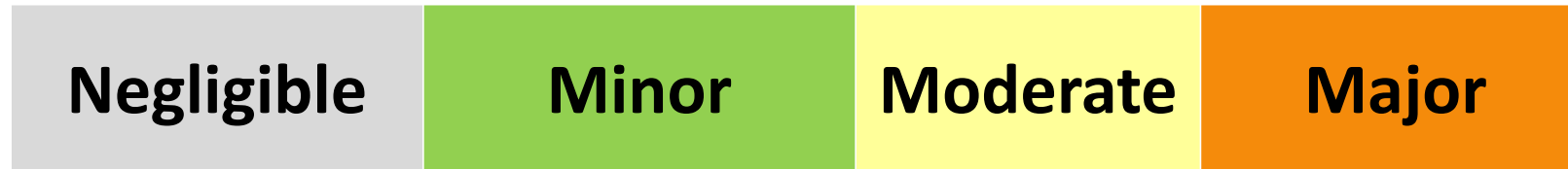


## Non-Routine Activities

Severe storms, allisions and collisions, spills, and recovery of lost survey equipment



## Classification Scheme for Potential Impacts



## Impact Producing Factors (IPFs) Associated with the Proposed Action

- Noise
- Air Emissions
- Lighting
- Habitat Degradation
- Routine Vessel Discharges
- Bottom Disturbance/Anchoring
- Entanglement

## Standard Operating Conditions (SOCs)

- Ensures the site characterization and assessment activities are conducted in a safe and environmentally responsible manner
- Lessees required to comply through lease stipulations and/or conditions of site assessment plan



# Resource Areas



## Resources anticipated to have **Negligible** impacts and eliminated from EA

- Bats
- Bathymetry, Geology, and Sediments
- Birds
- Coastal Habitats
- Coastal Infrastructure
- Demographics and Employment
- Environmental Justice
- Physical Oceanography
- Visual Resources
- Water Quality



## Resources analyzed in the EA

- Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Benthic Resources
- Commercial and Recreational Fishing
- Cultural, Historical, and Archaeological Resources
- Finfish, Invertebrates, and Essential Fish Habitat
- Marine Mammals
- Military Use and Navigation/Vessel Traffic
- Recreation and Tourism
- Sea Turtles



# Alternatives

## Alternative A – No Action

No leases or grants would be issued in the Central Atlantic at this time. Some site characterization surveys (e.g., biological surveys) and off-lease site assessment activities do not require BOEM approval and could still be conducted under Alternative A, but these activities would not be likely to occur without a commercial wind energy lease or grant.

Alternative A includes other ongoing activities and reasonably foreseeable future (planned) actions occurring in the same geographic area and timeframe (5 to 7 years after first lease issuance).

## Alternative B – Proposed Action

Lease issuance, site characterization, and site assessment activities could occur in the WEAs for which leases are offered, and between the WEAs for which leases are offered and shore along the potential transmission cable corridors.



# Potential Environmental Consequences

## Impact Determination: Alternative B (Proposed Action)

Resource	Routine Activities		Non-Routine Events
	Site Assessment	Site Characterization	
<b>Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions</b>	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
<b>Benthic Resources</b>	Negligible to Minor	Negligible to Minor	Negligible
<b>Commercial and Recreational Fishing</b>	Negligible to Minor	Negligible to Minor	Negligible
<b>Cultural, Historical, and Archaeological Resources</b>	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
<b>Finfish, Invertebrates, and Essential Fish Habitat</b>	Negligible	Negligible to Minor	Negligible
<b>Marine Mammals</b>	Negligible to Minor	Negligible to Minor	Negligible
<b>Military Use and Navigation/Vessel Traffic</b>	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
<b>Recreation and Tourism</b>	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
<b>Sea Turtles</b>	Negligible	Negligible to Minor	Negligible



# Consultations

- **Endangered Species Act**
  - U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
  - National Marine Fisheries Service
- **Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act**
  - National Marine Fisheries Service
- **Marine Mammal Protection Act**
  - National Marine Fisheries Service
- **Coastal Zone Management Act**
  - States of Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina
- **Tribal Coordination and Government-to-Government Consultation with Federally Recognized Tribes**
  - 23 federally recognized Tribes with historic and cultural ties to the Central Atlantic
- **National Historic Preservation Act (Section 106)**
  - Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia State Historic Preservation Offices
  - Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
  - 22 federally recognized Native American Tribes consulting
  - Certified local governments, historical preservation societies, museums, and state recognized Tribes



# Next Steps

Action	Timing
Published Draft EA	January 12, 2024
30-Day Comment Period	Ends February 12, 2024
Publish Final EA and Finding of No Significant Impact, if applicable	Spring/Summer 2024
Publish Final Sale Notice	
Minimum 30-Day Waiting Period	
Sale Date	Fall 2024





## Public comment period ends February 12, 2024

### Helpful Types of Comments

- Accuracy of information
- Adequacy of, methodology for, or assumptions used in the environmental analysis
- New information relevant to the analysis or that would change the conclusions
- Where clarification is needed



#### Public Meetings January 30 and February 1, 2024

For more information visit the BOEM virtual public meeting website

<https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/state-activities/central-atlantic>



Online at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov): Search for Docket No. BOEM-2024-0004 Click on the “Comment” button. Enter your information and comment, then click “Submit Comment.”



#### In writing to:

Central Atlantic Wind Leasing EA, Chief, Office of Renewable Energy Programs, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, 45600 Woodland Road (Mailstop VAM-OREP), Sterling, VA 20166

[www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/state-activities/central-atlantic](https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/state-activities/central-atlantic)

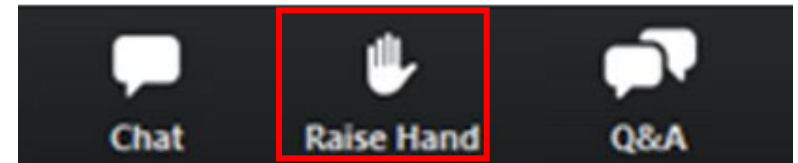
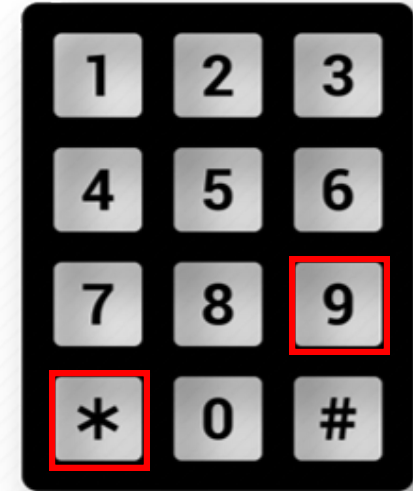


**Break – 5 minutes**

# Official Public Comments

## Order of Public Comments

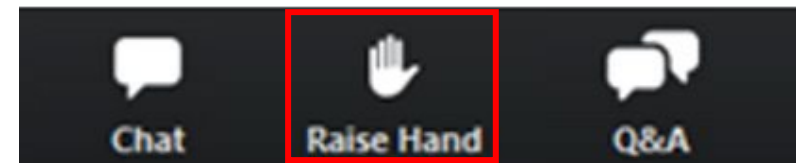
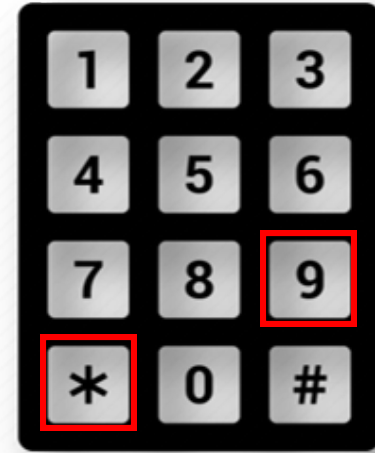
- We will start by calling on those who registered in advance to comment. The Facilitator will call on them in the order they registered
- Once those comments are completed, others will be invited to comment
- Commenters will be called on by the Facilitator in the order they raised their hands



# Official Public Comments

## Open for Public Comment

- To comment, use the 'raise hand' button in Zoom (or \*9 for phone-only participants)
- When you are called upon, the Facilitator will invite you to unmute your line
- Please state and spell your name when you begin
- Please limit comments to 5 minutes.  
For testimony more than 5 minutes, you can submit your comments in writing



# Comments Limited to Five Minutes

04:59





**Break – 5 minutes**

# Question and Answer Session

## **BOEM Closing Remarks**

**Lisa Landers, NEPA Section Chief  
Environmental Branch for Renewable Energy  
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management**

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