

New England Wind Project

How did BOEM assess seascape, landscape, and visual impacts from the New England Wind Project?

- A conservative 40 nautical mile (46 mile) radius around the wind turbine generators (WTGs) was established as the extent of potential WTG visibility.
- GIS-based viewshed modeling identified portions of Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket, and surrounding islands where WTG blade tips and nacelles would be theoretically visible, based on topography and vegetation.
- BOEM's Seascape, Landscape, and Visual Impact Assessment (SLVIA) methodology for evaluating the visible impacts of offshore wind projects combines two concepts.¹
 - Seascape and Landscape Impact Assessment (SLIA) analyzes impacts on the elements and features that make up a seascape or landscape and the distinct aesthetic, perceptual, and experiential aspects of that seascape or landscape. In SLIA, the impact receptors are the landscape and seascape and landscape themselves.
 - Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) analyzes the impacts on people of adding the proposed development to views from selected viewpoints. In VIA, the impact receptors are people, and impacts are based on how people may be affected by changes in the views due to the project.
- For the SLIA, 12 seascape, landscape, and open ocean "units" were identified, based on common characteristics.
- For the VIA, 12 key observation points (KOPs) were identified and evaluated.

¹ Source: Sullivan, R. 2021. Assessment of Seascape, Landscape, and Visual Impacts of Offshore Wind Energy Developments on the Outer Continental Shelf of the United States. OCS Study BOEM 2021-032. Accessed: April 28, 2022. Retrieved from: <https://www.boem.gov/sites/default/files/documents/environment/environmental-studies/BOEM-2021-032.pdf>

