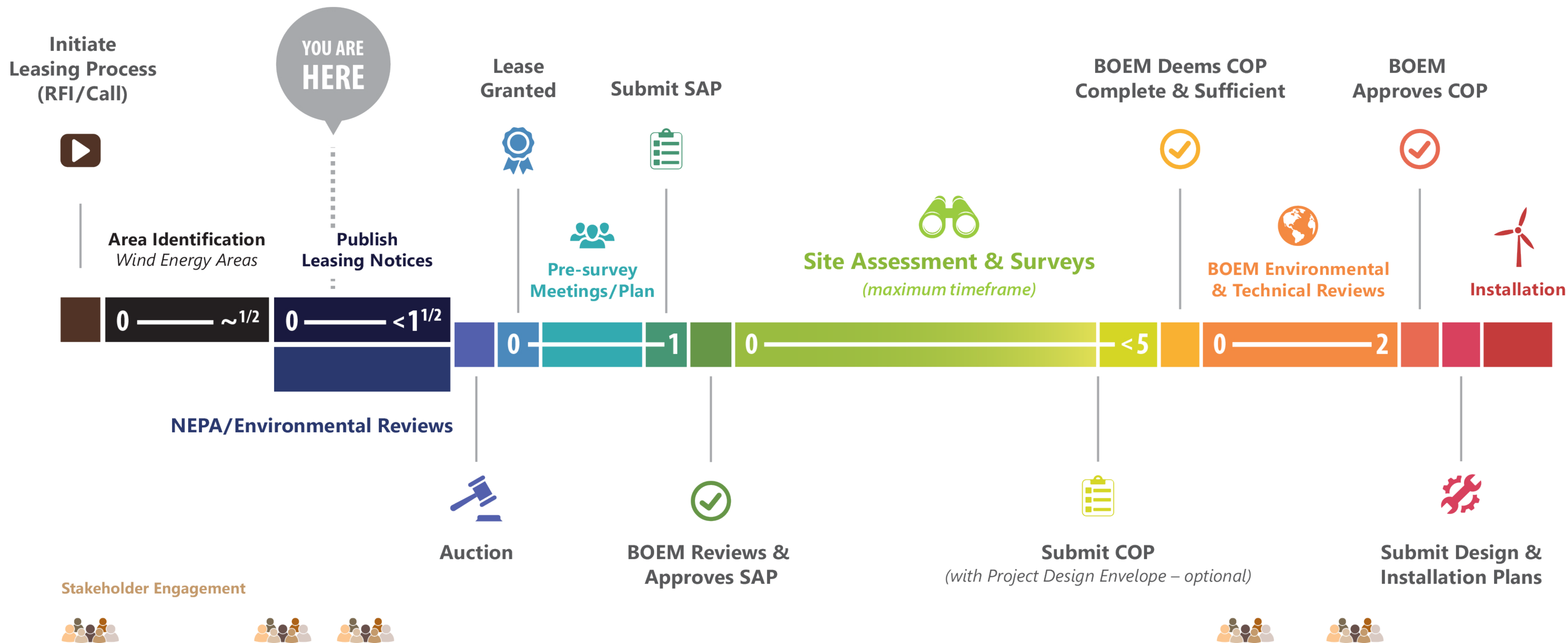


NY Bight Wind Energy Areas

# The Renewable Energy Process: Leasing to Operations





## NY Bight Wind Energy Areas

# We Want to Hear From You: How to Comment

BOEM has prepared a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed wind lease issuance and site assessment and characterization activities in the NY Bight Wind Energy Areas (WEA) on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf. BOEM is inviting all stakeholders to submit comments on the information in the draft EA. Providing your local expertise and perspective will help produce a more complete environmental analysis of the proposed project resulting in a more informed decision.

### What is BOEM looking for comments on?

- Accuracy of information in the draft EA
- 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

### How can I submit my comments?



**Online at Regulations.gov** using docket number **BOEM-2021-0054**.

In the box titled "SEARCH for: Rules, Comments, Adjudications or Supporting Documents," enter **BOEM-2021-0054**, and click "search." View supporting and related materials available for this notice, then click the "Comment Now!" button on the right side of the screen.



**During the virtual public meetings** through the public testimony.

#### **In writing to:**

"Comments on New York Bight EA"  
Office of Renewable Energy Programs  
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management  
Office of Renewable Energy Programs  
45600 Woodland Road (VAM-OREP)  
Sterling, VA 20166



### When are comments due?

Comments must be received or postmarked no later than  
**SEPTEMBER 9, 2021**

### What will BOEM do with the comments it receives?

When the public comment period is finished, BOEM will analyze comments, conduct further analysis as necessary, and prepare the final EA.

In the final EA, BOEM must respond to the substantive comments received from other government agencies and the public.

The response can be in the form of changes in the final EA, factual corrections, modifications to the analyses or the alternatives, new alternatives considered, or an explanation of why a comment does not require BOEM's response.

A copy or a summary of substantive comments and the responses to them will be included in the final EA.



NY Bight Wind Energy Areas

# NY Bight Project Overview

BOEM proposes to issue up to 10 commercial and research leases within the nearly 800,000-acre wind energy areas (WEAs) of the New York Bight, and granting of rights-of-way and rights-of-use and easement in the region. BOEM may issue leases as early as late 2021 and through late 2022.

## Site assessment and characterization activities

**Meteorological and Oceanographic Buoys** — temporarily install sensors to collect atmospheric and oceanographic observations

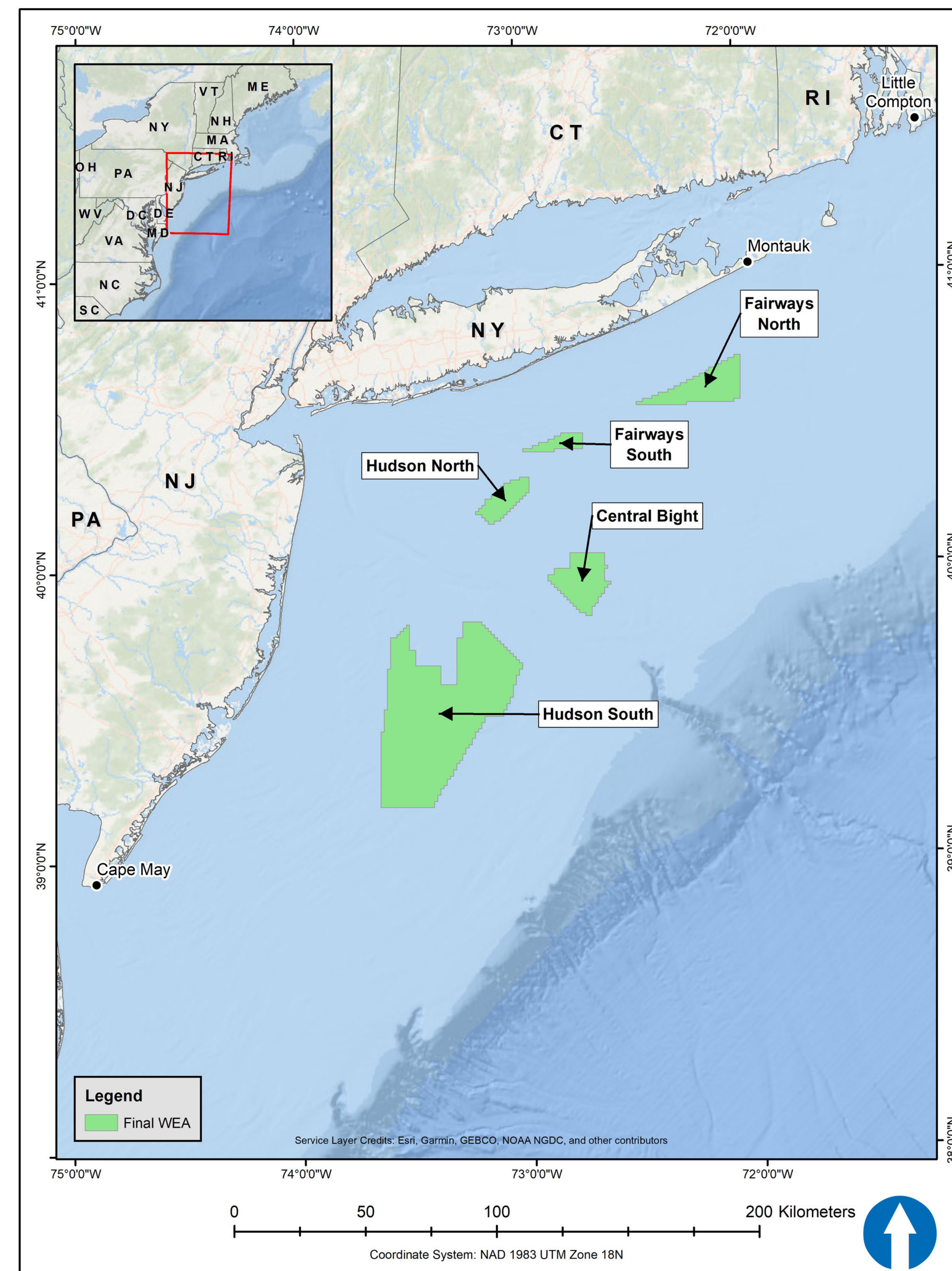
**Geophysical Surveys** — use remote sensing to collect information about the physical environment, such as archaeological resources, geohazards, habitat, cable routes, sediment characteristics, unexploded ordinance

**Geotechnical Surveys** — gather information about the physical characteristics of the soil and rocks to determine whether the seabed can support foundation structures

**Biological Surveys** — understand potential impacts to biological resources (for example, benthic habitat and birds) if wind energy development were to occur.

## NY Bight WEAs

- Consist of 807,383 acres over five WEAs: Fairways North, Fairways South, Hudson North, Central Bight, and Hudson South
- Are at least 15 and 23 nautical miles from New York and New Jersey, respectively
- Have water depths ranging from 32 to 61 meters deep



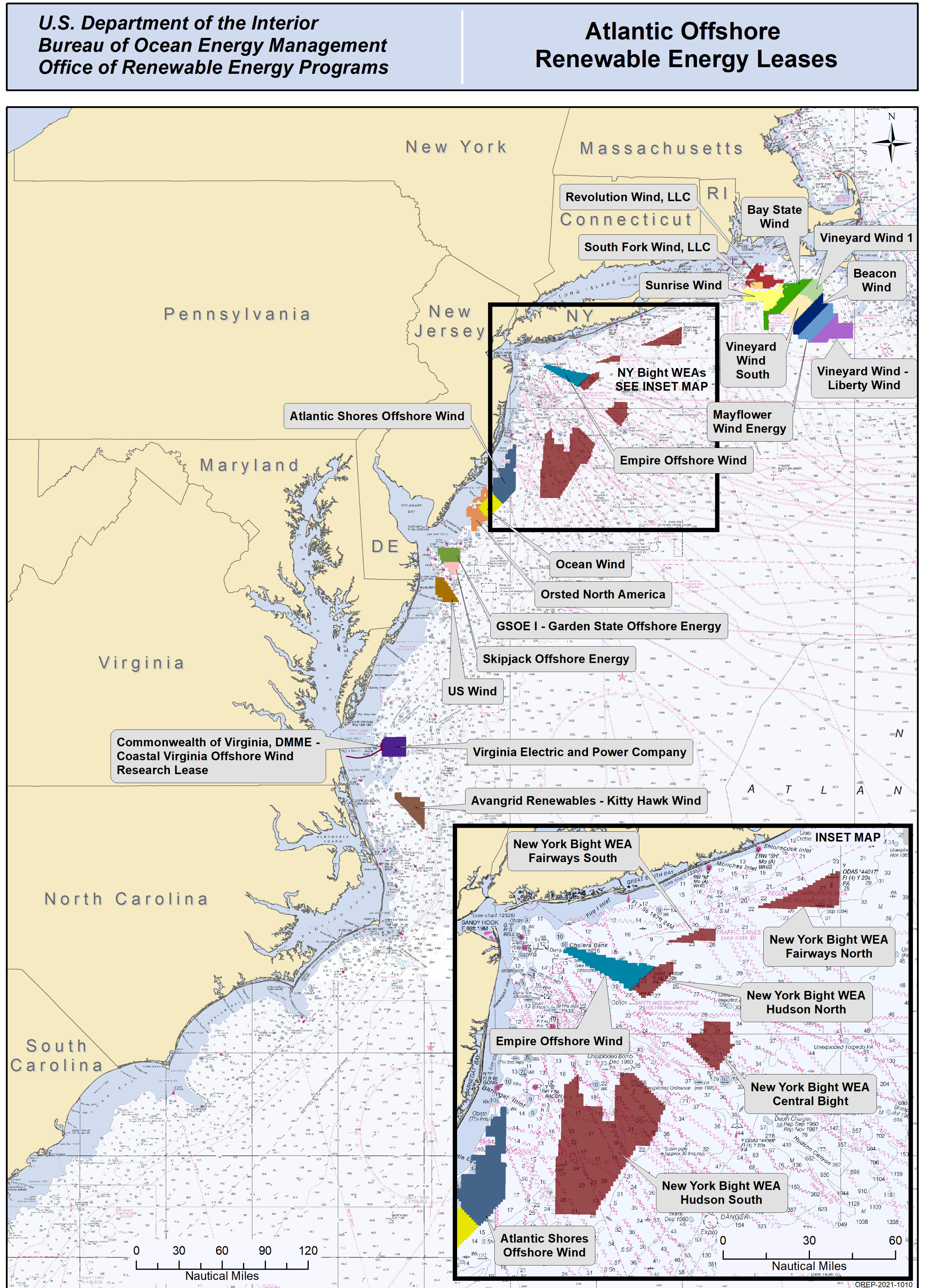


NY Bight Wind Energy Areas

# Outer Continental Shelf Renewable Energy Lease Areas

In 2009, BOEM announced final regulations for the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Renewable Energy Program. The Energy Policy Act of 2005 and various regulations provide a framework for issuing leases, easements and rights-of-way for OCS activities that support production and transmission of energy from sources other than oil and natural gas. BOEM is responsible for offshore renewable energy development in Federal waters and anticipates substantial future development on the OCS.

This map depicts active commercial and research renewable energy leases issued by BOEM on the Atlantic OCS in addition to the NY Bight WEAs. Where possible, individual projects have been identified.



This map depicts active commercial and research renewable energy leases issued on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. Where possible individual projects have been identified.

Data Sources: BOEM, GEBCO, US Census Bureau  
Map Date: 08/06/2021





**NY Bight Wind Energy Areas**

# Proposed Survey Activities

Survey Method	Use	Description
High-resolution Geophysical	Shallow hazards Archaeological Bathymetric charting Benthic habitat	Sub-bottom profiler Side-scan sonar Multibeam echosounder Magnetometer
Geotechnical/Sub-bottom Sampling	Geological	Vibracores Deep borings Cone penetration tests
Biological	Benthic habitat	Grab sampling Benthic sled Underwater imagery Sediment profile imaging
	Avian	Aerial digital imaging Visual observation from boat or airplane
	Bat	Ultrasonic detectors installed on survey vessels used for other surveys
	Marine fauna (marine mammals, sea turtles)	Visual observation from boat or airplane
	Fish	Direct sampling of fish and invertebrates

## High-Resolution Geophysical Survey Equipment and Methods

Survey Method	Use	Description
Sub-bottom Profiler	Collect geophysical data on shallow hazards, archaeological resources, and subsurface sediments	Typically, a high-resolution CHIRP System sub-bottom profiler is used to generate a profile view below the bottom of the seabed, which is interpreted to develop a geologic cross-section of subsurface sediment conditions under the track line surveyed. Another type of sub-bottom profiler that may be employed is a medium penetration system such as a boomer, bubble pulser, or impulse-type system. Sub-bottom profilers are capable of penetrating sediment depth ranges of 3 m to greater than 100 m, depending on frequency and bottom composition.
Side-scan Sonar	Collect geophysical data on shallow hazards and archaeological resources assessments	This survey technique is used to evaluate surface sediments, seafloor morphology, and potential surface obstructions. A typical side-scan sonar system consists of a top-side processor, tow cable, and towfish with transducers (or "pingers") located on the sides, which generate and record the returning sound that travels through the water column at a known speed.
Multibeam Echosounder	Bathymetric charting	A depth sounder is a microprocessor-controlled, high-resolution survey-grade system that measures precise water depths in both digital and graphic formats. The system would be used in such a manner as to record with a sweep appropriate to the range of water depths expected in the survey area. Multibeam bathymetry systems may be more appropriate than other tools for characterizing those WEAs containing complex bathymetric features or sensitive benthic habitats, such as hardbottom areas.
Magnetometer	Collect geophysical data on shallow hazards and archaeological resources assessments	Magnetometer surveys detect and aid in the identification of ferrous or other objects having a distinct magnetic signature. The magnetometer sensor is typically towed as near as possible to the seafloor and anticipated to be no more than approximately 6 m above the seafloor.





## NY Bight Wind Energy Areas

# Proposed Survey Activities

## Geotechnic and Benthic Survey Methods

Survey Method	Use	Description
Bottom-sampling Devices	Penetrate depths from a few centimeters to several meters	A piston core or gravity core is often used to obtain samples of soft surficial sediments. Unlike a gravity core, which is essentially a weighted core barrel that is allowed to free-fall into the water, piston cores have a “piston” mechanism that triggers when the corer hits the seafloor. The main advantage of a piston core over a gravity core is that the piston allows the best possible sediment sample to be obtained by avoiding disturbance of the sample. Shallow-bottom coring employs a rotary drill that penetrates through several feet of consolidated rock. Drilling produces low-intensity, low-frequency sound through the drill string. This methods does not use high energy sound sources.
Vibracores	Obtain samples of unconsolidated sediment; may also inform the interpretation of features identified through the high-resolution geophysical surveys	Vibracore samplers typically consist of a core barrel and an oscillating driving mechanism that propels the core barrel into the sub-bottom. After the core barrel is driven to its full length, it is then retracted from the sediment and returned to the deck of the vessel. Typically, core samples range up to 6 m long with 8 cm diameters in size, although some devices obtain samples up to 12 m long.
Deep Borings	Sample and characterize the geological properties of sediments at the maximum expected depths of the structure foundations	A drill rig is used to obtain deep borings. The drill rig is mounted on a jack-up barge supported by four “spuds” that are lowered to the seafloor. Geologic borings can generally reach depths of 30–61 m within a few days (based on weather conditions). The acoustic levels from deep borings can be expected to be in the low-frequency bands and below the 160 dB threshold established by the National Marine Fisheries Service to protect marine mammals.
Cone Penetration Test (CPT)	Supplement or use in place of deep borings	A CPT rig would be mounted on a jack-up barge similar to that used for the deep borings. The top of a CPT drill probe is typically up to 8 cm in diameter, with connecting rods less than 15 cm in diameter.





**NY Bight Wind Energy Areas**

# Potential Impacts of Alternatives

BOEM has prepared a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed lease issuance and site assessment and characterization activities in the NY Bight Wind Energy Areas (WEA) on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf. The table below summarizes the potential impacts from the proposed action (Alternative B).

Under Alternative B routine activities, **site assessment** activities include met buoy deployment, operation, and decommissioning; **site characterization** activities include biological, geological, geotechnical, and archaeological surveys.

Resource	Impact Determination for Alternative B—Routine Activities		Impact Determination for Alternative B—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	Minor	
<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 (EFH)</b>	Negligible	Negligible to Minor	Negligible
<b>Marine Mammals</b>	Negligible (except for ESA-listed marine mammals, which are Minor to Moderate)	Negligible to Minor (except for ESA-listed marine mammals which are Minor to Moderate)	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





## NY Bight Wind Energy Areas

# Consultations

## Endangered Species Act (ESA)

Federal agencies must ensure that any action authorized, funded, or carried out by the agency is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered or threatened species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat of those species. When the action of a Federal agency may affect a protected species or its critical habitat, that agency is required to consult with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and/or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), depending upon the protected species.

**USFWS:** BOEM submitted to USFWS on August 10, 2021, the biological assessment the species and critical habitat that may be affected and requested concurrence with BOEM's determination that the impacts of the proposed activities are not likely to adversely affect ESA-listed bird and bat species.

**NMFS:** The activities that may result from of the issuance of leases in the NY Bight are subject to a programmatic consultation with NMFS currently in progress. BOEM and NMFS are discussing the need for any additional consultation under the ESA.

## Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act

Federal agencies are required to consult with NMFS on any action that may result in adverse effects on EFH. Certain outer continental shelf (OCS) activities authorized by BOEM may result in adverse effects on essential fish habitat (EFH) and, therefore, require consultation with NMFS. Concurrent with this EA, BOEM will consult with NMFS regarding the impacts of the Proposed Action on EFH. BOEM has determined that the Proposed Action would not significantly affect the quality and quantity of EFH.

## Coastal Zone Management Act

Federal actions that are reasonably likely to affect any land or water use or natural resource of the coastal zone must be consistent to the maximum

extent practicable with relevant enforceable policies of a state's federally approved coastal management program. BOEM will prepare a Consistency Determination to determine whether issuing leases and site assessment activities are consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the provisions identified as enforceable by the Coastal Zone Management Programs of the states of NJ and NY.

## Government to Government Consultations with Federally Recognized Tribes

BOEM recognizes the unique legal relationship of the U.S. with tribal governments, and the bureau is required to consult with federally recognized Native American Tribes when a BOEM action has tribal implications. BOEM initiated consultations with nine Tribes with historic and cultural ties to the region under consideration in the EA. BOEM invited these Tribes to participate in the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 consultations, and BOEM is engaging these Tribes government-to-government consultation meetings to discuss the Proposed Sale Notice for the NY Bight.

## National Historic Preservation Act (Section 106)

Section 106 of the NHPA requires Federal agencies to consider the effects of their actions on historic properties and provide the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation an opportunity to comment. BOEM has implemented Programmatic Agreements for renewable energy projects on the OCS offshore NY, NJ, and RI. BOEM initiated consultation with the NY State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), NJ SHPO, RI SHPO, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and nine federally recognized Native American Tribes. BOEM contacted over 500 entities to solicit public comment and input, and prepared a Finding of No Historic Properties Affected, which was provided to consulting parties.

