

The Department of the Interior's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) promotes energy independence, environmental protection and economic development through responsible, science-based management of energy and mineral resources on the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). BOEM is responsible for overseeing offshore renewable energy development in OCS areas in an economically and environmentally sound manner. While BOEM's offshore renewable energy portfolio consists of several resources—including ocean wave and ocean current energy—offshore wind energy has garnered the most interest to date.

Overview

Safe, reliable and affordable domestic energy production powers our economy, promotes jobs and is critical to our nation's security. Offshore wind is an abundant and efficient alternative domestic energy resource found close to major coastal cities, where more than half of the U.S. population resides and energy needs are high. Compared to onshore wind, offshore winds are generally stronger and more consistent. Since higher wind speeds can produce significantly more energy and electricity, there is increasing interest in developing offshore wind energy on the OCS.

Demand for offshore wind energy has never been greater. Technological advances, falling costs, increased interest and tremendous economic potential make offshore wind the most promising avenue for diversifying the national energy portfolio.

Significant job growth is expected in several offshore wind industries, including manufacturing, construction, supply chain, operations, maintenance and transportation.¹ Increased job

opportunities are also expected in restaurants, hotels and other service industries.

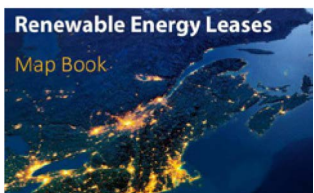
Under the Energy Policy Act of 2005, BOEM facilitates the responsible development of renewable energy resources on the OCS through conscientious planning, stakeholder engagement, comprehensive environmental analysis and sound technical review.

Almost half of the U.S. population
lives near
coastal areas
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consistent than onshore**

For any proposed OCS development, BOEM evaluates the potential impacts on ocean users, historic and cultural resources and the marine environment. BOEM uses a multi-phased process to grant access to ocean areas that are suitable for wind energy development that consists of the following phases:



Planning and Analysis – Identify potential areas for wind energy leasing through collaborative, consultative and analytical processes. Conduct environmental compliance reviews and consultations with Tribes, states and natural resource agencies.



Leasing – Issue commercial wind energy leases, either through a competitive or noncompetitive process. Commercial leases give the lessee exclusive rights to develop and submit its plans for BOEM approval, not to construct any facilities.



Site Assessment – Receive Site Assessment Plan (SAP), the lessee's detailed proposal for construction of a meteorological tower and/or the installation of meteorological buoys on the leasehold. Conduct site characterization surveys and studies (e.g., avian, marine mammal, archeological). BOEM must approve the SAP before the lessee conducts these activities.



Construction and Operations – Receive the lessee's Construction and Operations Plan (COP), which details a wind energy project's construction and operations plan. BOEM conducts environmental and technical reviews of the COP before deciding whether to approve, modify, or deny the plan. The developer must submit a plan to decommission facilities prior to the end of the lease term.

BOEM engages key stakeholders throughout these processes to ensure early communication with interested and potentially affected parties, which is critical to managing potential conflicts. In addition, the bureau has established Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Forces for areas where there is interest in developing offshore renewable energy. Each task force collects and shares information that would be useful and relevant to BOEM's decision making process. BOEM is also integrating regional perspectives into the task forces to better utilize the shared regional interests and concerns between states.

BOEM also engages the task forces – as well as a broad spectrum of agencies, universities and other stakeholders – to identify critical data gaps and fund studies on areas for renewable energy development where physical and biological environment information may be lacking.

¹ Source: New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, et.al. U.S. Job Creation in Offshore Wind: A Report for the Roadmap Project for Multi-State Cooperation on Offshore Wind (NYSERDA Report 17-22): <https://tethys.pnnl.gov/publications/us-job-creation-offshore-wind-report-roadmap-project-multi-state-cooperation-offshore>



For More Information:

<https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy>

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