



## US Offshore Wind Collaborative

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For the USOWC Steering Committee

### A Call for Federal-State Collaboration in Offshore Wind Energy Development

There are currently five states in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic region actively engaged in comprehensive ocean planning, with offshore wind energy as a centerpiece-issue, and/or partnering with developers to site projects in federal waters (MA, RI, NY, NJ, DE). Representatives from the energy and environmental agencies in these and neighboring states have been conferring with the US Offshore Wind Collaborative (USOWC)<sup>1</sup> over the past several months and have determined that cooperative engagement among the states, and between the states and federal agency partners is essential to meeting our urgent renewable energy and environmental objectives, through the sustainable development of the wind resources along our coastlines.

Our overall goals are:

- To develop a consistent, efficient approach to integrating state-federal activities, including resource assessment and data collection.
- To develop a mechanism for addressing *regional* needs and issues in state-based planning initiatives.
- To consider the interface between state planning and federal lease-sale activities.

Clearly this important agenda calls for the integrated and focused participation, with the states, from key federal regulatory and resource agencies including in particular the Minerals Management Service (MMS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Our preliminary discussion yielded the following preliminary conclusions:

- **Data consistency:** Data collected from met towers should be standardized and tied into the Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS). Data standards in general (e.g., avian and marine mammal assessments) should be standardized in order to build a regional knowledge base to support assessment of cumulative impacts. Use of data collected with public support, and maintained in the public domain,

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<sup>1</sup> The USOWC brings together government, industry, academia and NGOs to catalyze sustainable offshore wind energy development in the United States. See [www.usowc.org](http://www.usowc.org)



has been and important contributor to growth of the offshore wind industry in the EU. We want to work jointly with MMS and NOAA's Coastal Services Center on development of the Multi-purpose Marine Cadastre to serve as a common data management platform.

- **Regional planning:** A state-federal partnership should be created to advance strategic regional ocean renewable energy planning. Particularly when looking at development areas outside state waters, a regional view is essential. Early consultation among adjacent states with identification of areas to avoid, cumulative impact analysis, and consideration of regional energy and shore side infrastructure, is important. States and the federal agencies need to be working to encourage offshore wind projects as a common goal, with regional cooperation. Adjacent federal waters, along with the federal authorities which exist in states waters, are an integral component of this regional approach. Specifically, the states in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions recommend establishment of a regional offshore wind working group of the states, MMS, NOAA, and other appropriate agencies. This collective effort will be aimed at supporting rather than replacing the initiatives of individual states.
- **Regulatory and lease process questions:** We are anticipating the release by MMS of the new rule for alternative energy development on the Outer Continental Shelf, and would hope those rules will be released by mid January. There will be numerous provisions which will require discussion and interpretation, and these are urgent questions for those states aggressively planning for offshore wind development. We need to understand how the Federal Consistency provisions of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) will be applied by adjacent states, and how we make this process efficient and cooperative.
- **Adequate resources needed:** Offshore wind is at a more advanced stage of technological development and has a higher resource potential than other offshore renewable energy sources on the east coast; it is not burdened by the jurisdictional issues between MMS and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and multiple states are actively engaged in investment and planning for offshore wind development. We want to ensure that MMS and NOAA have the resources and staffing to move the offshore wind energy development forward efficiently and with appropriate attention to the issues noted above. Specifically, we ask that MMS and NOAA identify dedicated staffing to work with our states to facilitate planning, coordination, and regulatory review of projects in this region.
- **Research and development.** The federal government should increase funding to DOE, MMS, NOAA, and interested states to establish a coordinated research and development program regarding analysis and understanding of baseline resource conditions, potential impacts, best management practices and effective mitigation measures related to offshore wind and ocean renewable energy development. A coordinated national/state research program will improve support for ocean energy systems by ensuring generation of objective, credible information; a focus



on priority research needs and information gaps; and coordination between the public and private sectors in conduct of research and studies. It also will reduce duplication and transaction costs to developers.

We look forward to working with the leadership at NOAA, MMS and other relevant federal agencies to establish a formal joint planning partnership for offshore wind development on the east coast.

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