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# Department of the Interior Announces Next Steps for Offshore Wind Energy in Gulf of Mexico

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Date: Wednesday, July 20, 2022

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**NEW ORLEANS** — In response to the President’s call to advance offshore wind development and accelerate the transition to a clean energy economy, the Department of the Interior today announced next steps to bring the opportunity of offshore wind energy to the Gulf of Mexico.

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) works under its renewable energy competitive leasing process to identify the offshore locations that appear most suitable for development, taking into consideration potential impacts to resources and ocean users. BOEM is seeking public input on the identification of two potential wind energy areas (WEAs) in the Gulf of Mexico (GOM) Outer Continental Shelf (OCS).

“President Biden has called on us to address the climate crisis and Interior is taking that challenge to heart. The promise of renewable energy is undeniable, as is the momentum for a clean energy transition,” said **Secretary of the Interior Deb**

**Haaland.** “Today’s announcement in the Gulf of Mexico is one of many commitments we are making to spur innovation, create good-paying jobs, and collaborate with states, Tribes and communities to ensure that we are doing everything we can to care for our Earth.”

Over the past year, the Biden-Harris administration has launched the American offshore wind industry by approving and celebrating the groundbreaking of the nation’s first two commercial-scale, offshore wind projects in federal waters. By 2025, the Interior Department plans to potentially hold up to five additional offshore lease sales and complete the review of at least 16 plans to construct and operate commercial, offshore wind energy facilities, which would represent more than 22 gigawatts of clean energy for the nation.

“BOEM used the most current scientific data to analyze 30 million acres in the Call Area to find the best spaces for wind energy development. We are invested in working in partnership with states and communities to find areas that avoid or minimize conflicts with other ocean uses and marine life in the Gulf of Mexico,” said **BOEM Director Amanda Lefton**. “We are committed to a transparent, inclusive and data-driven process that ensures all ocean users flourish in the Gulf.”

The first draft WEA is located approximately 24 nautical miles (nm) off the coast of Galveston, TX. The area for review totals 546,645 acres and has the potential to power 2.3 million homes with clean wind energy. The second draft WEA is located approximately 56 nm off the coast of Lake Charles, LA. The area for review totals 188,023 acres and has the potential to power 799,000 homes.

The two draft WEAs represent a subset of the original 30-million acre Gulf of Mexico Call Area that the Department of the Interior announced for public comment in October 2021. The draft WEAs were reduced to avoid potential impacts on other ocean uses and resources, such as commercial and recreational fishing, maritime navigation, military activities, marine protected species, avian species, and existing infrastructure.

Public comments on the draft WEAs will be accepted for 30 days beginning July 20, 2022.

In addition to the draft WEAs, BOEM has prepared a draft environmental assessment (EA) covering the entire call area to consider the potential impacts from site characterization (e.g., marine mammal surveys) and site assessment (e.g., installation of meteorological buoys) activities expected to take place following lease issuance. The EA analysis will inform potential lease stipulations necessary to address identified environmental impacts associated with offshore wind leasing activities. Public comments on the draft EA will also be accepted for 30 days beginning July 20, 2022.

During the comment period, BOEM will hold two virtual public meetings where the public can learn more about the environmental review process. There will also be an opportunity for participants to ask questions and provide comments on the draft EA.

Information about how to register for the public meetings, and instructions for how to submit questions and comments can be on BOEM's [Gulf of Mexico Renewable Energy webpage](#).

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