



New England Fishery Management Council

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 7, 2021

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Council Approves Revised Wind Energy Policy; Receives Offshore Wind Project Updates from BOEM

The New England Fishery Management Council has approved a revised wind energy policy that builds on the original policy and better responds to the rapidly changing ocean landscape associated with offshore wind development in the Greater Atlantic Region.

The Council took this action on the first day of its [December 7-9, 2021](#) webinar meeting. Additionally, the Council received:

- An update on the status of other 2021 habitat-related work; and
- A presentation from the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) covering the status of proposed and advancing wind energy projects off the Atlantic seaboard.

Wind Energy Policy

The Council adopted its original wind energy policy in 2018 based on the Mid-Atlantic Council's 2016 policy. The revised policy was prepared by the New England Council's Habitat Plan Development Team in collaboration with staff from the Mid-Atlantic Council and NOAA Fisheries.

The Council's Habitat Committee and Advisory Panel reviewed the draft policy for Council approval. Because the New England and Mid-Atlantic Councils coordinate closely on offshore wind issues, the Council also considered comments from the Mid-Atlantic Council's Ecosystems and Ocean Planning Committee and Advisory Panel.

The policy's list of principles and best management practices includes 25 points categorized under six headings:

- Best management practices and stakeholder engagement;
- Project siting and environmental review;

*At right, Block
Island Wind
Farm.*

*– Courtesy of
[NOAA Fisheries](#)*

Revised Wind Energy Policy

"The Council is committed to ensuring that offshore wind projects in New England are developed in a manner that is compatible with the protection of Council-managed species and their habitats, and with commercial and recreational fishing activities ...

"This includes but is not limited to providing input to federal and state agencies on project siting, design, and execution based on a list of principles and best management practices."

** The revised policy is posted [HERE](#).*





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- Construction and operations;
- Research and monitoring; and
- Navigation and safety;
- Compensation and mitigation.

A copy of the revised wind energy policy is posted [HERE](#). Other habitat-related policies can be found [HERE](#).

BOEM Request for Information on Reducing or Avoiding Impacts of Offshore Wind Energy on Fisheries

The Council received a briefing from BOEM that covered numerous items, including updates on the New York Bight lease sale, Central Atlantic Planning Area development, the Gulf of Maine research lease application, and the anticipated schedule of environmental impact statements for 2022 (see table below). More information about each of these items is available in the [BOEM presentation](#) and the associated [briefing memo](#).

On a more time-sensitive note, the Council was briefed on BOEM's request for information "to obtain input from the public, especially the fishing community, on avoiding, minimizing and, if needed, compensating for impacts from offshore wind energy projects to commercial and recreational fisheries."

BOEM is working with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS/NOAA Fisheries) and affected coastal states to develop this guidance "to ensure fair, equitable, and predictable methodologies for mitigating impacts of offshore renewable energy projects." The bureau published the [request for information](#) in November and is collecting public comments through [January 7, 2022](#). The Council is preparing comments to meet this [deadline](#). The Council also agreed to develop comments related to the [Amitie telecommunications cable project](#).



Need More Habitat Information?

- All habitat-related documents used during the Council's December meeting can be found [here](#).
- **Questions?** Contact Michelle Bachman, the Council's habitat coordinator, at (978) 465-0492, ext. 120, mbachman@nefmc.org.

Offshore Wind Construction and Operations Plans (COPs) Submitted to BOEM – Published Permitting Timetables ~ Anticipated EIS Documents in 2022 ~

Offshore Wind Project Name	NOI Notice of Intent	DEIS Draft Environmental Impact Statement	FEIS Final Environmental Impact Statement	ROD Record of Decision
Ocean Wind	3/30/2021	5/27/2022	2/17/2023	3/31/2023
Revolution Wind	4/30/2021	7/01/2022	3/24/2023	5/01/2023
Empire Wind	6/24/2021	8/12/2022	4/28/2023	6/12/2023
New England Wind formerly Vineyard Wind South	6/30/2021	8/26/2022	6/23/2023	7/23/2023
Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind	7/02/2021	8/01/2022	5/1/2023	6/01/2023
Kitty Hawk	7/30/2021	9/30/2022	6/23/2023	8/03/2023
Atlantic Shores	9/30/2021	12/02/2022	8/04/2023	9/29/2023

The information in the table above was provided by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management.