



New England and the Mid-Atlantic. There are currently 15 active commercial offshore wind leases in the Northwest Atlantic Shelf from North Carolina to Massachusetts (covering 1.7 million acres of ocean bottom) with additional lease areas under consideration. Many of these lease areas encompass historic, productive fishing grounds. In summer 2016 and fall 2018, BOEM published Calls for Information and Nominations to obtain nominations from companies interested in commercial wind energy leases within proposed areas off Hawaii and central and northern California, respectively. In late September 2019, BOEM convened a meeting of the Oregon OCS Renewable Energy Task Force to begin the conversation about potential activities offshore Oregon.

Ocean wind is an abundant, domestic energy resource that is located close to major coastal load centers, and can provide a renewable alternative to long-distance transmission or other types of electricity generation. However, there are challenges in balancing the potential of this new energy resource with the multitude of other ocean uses already in existence, including fishing, boating, shipping, and management of protected resources.

This session will build upon the ocean wind presentation MAFAC received from Dr. Jon Hare. Members will have an opportunity to learn about leasing, permitting and management of wind development in the marine environment from BOEM leadership, the federal agency responsible for all siting and permitting, and how NOAA Fisheries engages in the process. Additionally, MAFAC will hear from RODA, the broad coalition of fishing industry associations and fishing companies, and its interest in improving the socio-economic and environmental impact analysis process to ensure compatibility of new offshore development with historic fishing businesses.

With the growing interest in wind development, on both the East and West Coasts, NOAA Fisheries will continue to be engaged wind energy siting with respect to any potential impacts to its trust resources and legislative mandates.

## **6. Action to be taken by MAFAC members**

This is an opportunity for MAFAC members to get information and ask questions on these important efforts.

The Ocean Wind Ad Hoc Working Group will continue their discussions about the potential interactions from ocean wind development that pose challenges to NOAA Fisheries' mission. To date, some of the issues discussed by the Working Group include:

- a. Addressing unfunded mandates; securing a funding source and process for supporting robust NOAA Fisheries Science Center research associated with developing a baseline (typically understood to be developed before permitting and construction begins) and monitoring construction and operations impacts.
- b. Lack of understanding about the potential cumulative impacts to marine habitats and fisheries, given lease sale EISs are developed for particular wind energy areas, which are more localized, rather than a coast-wide assessment.
- c. Need to assess how NOAA Fisheries annual surveys and other science enterprise activities may be impacted, and what can be done at both the leasing and permitting process to mitigate impacts.
- d. Supporting the existing MOU between NOAA-RODA-BOEM and recommending it be implemented for Gulf, west coast and Alaska regions.
- e. Identifying how fishermen and fishing communities can engage earlier in the process and have their issues considered.

- f. Recommending the leasing process incorporate the above baseline info and fishermen's input into lease location determinations and siting and construction requirements.

Based on the presentations and discussions, the Ocean Wind Ad Hoc Working Group will determine whether it will propose recommendations for MAFAC consideration by the end of this meeting.

## Guest Speaker Biographies

### James Bennett – Chief of the Office of Renewable Energy Programs, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management



Jim Bennett is the Program Manager for the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's (BOEM) Renewable Energy Program. With nearly 40 years of experience in the environmental and energy sectors, Jim oversees the responsible development of renewable energy resources on the Outer Continental Shelf through conscientious planning, stakeholder engagement, comprehensive environmental analysis, and sound technical review.

Offshore wind is a vital national asset and has the potential to help contribute to the nation's energy diversity for decades to come. BOEM's renewable energy program now manages 15 active leases covering nearly 1.7 million acres on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) from Massachusetts to North Carolina.

Previously, Jim led BOEM's Division of Environmental Assessment, overseeing the Bureau's compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other environmental laws focusing on Federal OCS programs, including oil and gas, sand and gravel, and renewable energy. His experience encompasses events such as the Exxon Valdez and the Deepwater Horizon oil spills, the Cape Wind energy project, and offshore renewable energy activities particularly in the promising waters of the Atlantic.

He is a graduate of the Department's Manager Development Program and has earned two Master's degrees -- one in Environmental Planning and the other in Computer Systems Management.

### Annie Hawkins – Executive Director, Responsible Offshore Development Alliance (RODA)



Annie is professionally dedicated to improving ocean resource management through advocacy and regulatory initiatives. Prior to joining RODA, she provided government relations support to a variety of fishing industry and ocean technology clients with a Washington, D.C. law firm. She previously held positions in fisheries management and marine regulation including at the New England Fishery Management Council and NOAA's Large Marine Ecosystems program. Throughout her career she has specialized in working with public and private sector partners to develop practical, science-based solutions to business, policy, and environmental challenges.

Annie holds Juris Doctor and Master of Marine Affairs degrees from the University of Washington and a B.A. in Conservation Biology and Political Science from the University of Wisconsin.

## RODA References

[RODA's "Year in Review"](#) celebrates their first anniversary, and provides context into what they do as an organization. Also, the Responsible Offshore Science Alliance has a [framework for creating a regional science organization for offshore wind and fisheries](#).