

Annotated Agenda
MAFAC, Key West, Florida
May 24-26, 2011

- 1. Title of Discussion:** **DOI Smart from the Start Program**
- 2. Discussion Leader/Presenter:** **Ned Farquhar**, Deputy Assistant Secretary
Department of the Interior, Land and Minerals Management
Leah Russin, Senior Advisor
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement

3. Objective/Purpose: Informational. The purpose is to explain the Department of Interior (DOI) wind energy initiative for the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf called "Smart from the Start," launched last November, and how it is intended to facilitate siting, leasing and construction of new projects to spur rapid and responsible development of this abundant renewable resource.

4. Background/Synopsis: Smart from the Start is a new program designed to implement a smart permitting process that is efficient, thorough, and unburdened by needless red tape. The program is designed to help the DOI and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE) identify priority Wind Energy Areas for potential development, improve DOI's coordination with local, state, and federal partners, and accelerate the leasing process. Through wise planning, DOI will help build a robust and environmentally responsible offshore renewable energy program that creates jobs along the coast. The accelerated leasing process is being simplified through a regulatory change, and it is anticipated it will enable leases to be issued in 2011 and 2012.

BOEMRE is proposing a revision to its regulations that will simplify the leasing process for offshore wind in situations where there is only one qualified and interested developer. The revision eliminates a redundant and therefore unnecessary step, and will potentially save up to 6-12 months in the leasing process through this efficiency.

Wind Energy Areas (WEA) are offshore locations that appear most suitable for wind energy development. Data would continue to be collected for these high priority areas to inform government and industry assessments and planning, allowing a more efficient process for permitting and siting responsible development. Key aspects of the Atlantic Wind 'Smart from the Start' initiative are modeled on successful efforts that are helping to launch major solar energy projects on U.S. public lands in the West, including a 'Smart from the Start' approach that designated solar energy study areas, conducted early environmental reviews, and is coordinating state and federal permitting processes for large-scale solar projects.

In January 2011, BOEMRE initiated a NEPA environmental assessment to evaluate the potential impacts associated with site assessment activities in identified WEAs. In addition, there will be rapid and close coordination with other federal agencies to compile existing site assessment data. If no significant impacts are identified in WEAs, BOEMRE would offer leases in these areas by the end of 2011/early 2012. Developers will still need appropriate and comprehensive site-specific NEPA review of individual projects. BOEMRE will work directly with project proponents to ensure that those reviews take place on aggressive schedules with frequent interagency communications and dedicated staff.

To address the need for transmission infrastructure to bring this offshore power ashore, BOEMRE will move forward aggressively, on a parallel track, to process applications to build offshore transmission lines. The identification of wind energy areas should assist the siting and feasibility reviews associated with potential offshore transmission lines.

- 5. Options listed from 1 to n:** TBD

6. Preferred Recommendation: TBD

Record of Decision:

Decision, Next Step(s) and/or Action:

Assigned to:

Due Date: