

BOEM Advances Offshore Wind Leasing Process in California

Public Input Sought on Offshore Wind Areas off California North and Central Coasts

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As part of the Biden-Harris administration's commitment to creating nearly 80,000 jobs through developing 30 gigawatts of offshore wind energy by 2030, the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) today announced two actions advancing the federal wind leasing process offshore California.

First, BOEM will publish a Call for Information and Nominations (Call) to request information from the public and determine industry interest in commercial offshore wind energy development for two new areas within a 399-square-mile area located off central California, identified as the [Morro Bay Call Area East and West Extensions](#). The new areas are adjacent to the Morro Bay Call Area, originally identified by BOEM in 2018. The extension areas will be included in BOEM's overall analysis of the Morro Bay 399 Area.

Second, BOEM has formally designated the Humboldt Wind Energy Area (WEA) offshore northern California and will now proceed with an environmental review of this area, as required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

"Today's announcement builds on an earlier agreement between the White House, the Department of the Interior, the Department of Defense, and the state of California to advance areas for offshore wind off the northern and central coasts of California," said BOEM Director Amanda Lefton. "If approved for offshore wind energy development, these areas could bring us closer to reaching this administration's goal of deploying 30 gigawatts of offshore wind by 2030."

On May 25, 2021, the Departments of the Interior and Defense and the state of California [announced their agreement](#) to advance areas for wind energy development

offshore the northern and central coasts of California, enabling a path forward for the Humboldt Call Area and areas within and adjacent to the Morro Bay Call Area.

“While we are still in the initial stages of BOEM's leasing process, today's announcement reflects years of working with ocean users, Tribal governments and local, state, and federal agencies to obtain the best available information to reduce potential conflicts,” said BOEM Acting Pacific Region Director Thomas Liu. “The Morro Bay Call and Humboldt Environmental Assessment offer important opportunities to further solicit feedback from Tribes, ocean users and stakeholders.”

In addition to contributing to the goals of the Biden-Harris administration, the development of offshore wind energy can help California reach its goal of 100 percent carbon-free energy by 2045, create good-paying union jobs, and foster investments in coastal communities. Offshore wind resources are typically stronger and more consistent than winds over land and are especially strong in the evening hours when solar energy production drops off, ensuring that offshore wind energy can make an important contribution to California's electric grid.

Morro Bay Call Area – East and West Extensions

The Morro Bay Call Area East Extension and the Morro Bay Call Area West Extension offshore the central California coast consist of approximately 141 square statute miles (90,025 acres).

BOEM will publish the Commercial Leasing for Wind Power Development on the Outer Continental Shelf Offshore Morro Bay, California, East and West Extensions – Call for Information and Nominations in the Federal Register on July 29, 2021, which will initiate a 45-day public comment period. BOEM will accept nominations and comments until September 13, 2021. Additional information on the Call and how to comment can be found at <https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/state-activities/morro-bay-call-extension-areas>.

Humboldt WEA

BOEM is also designating nearly 132,369 acres (206.8 square miles) as a WEA offshore Humboldt County in northern California. BOEM will conduct an environmental assessment (EA) of the WEA, per NEPA.

The EA will consider potential environmental consequences of site characterization activities (e.g., survey activities and core samples) and site assessment activities (e.g., installation of meteorological buoys) associated with issuing wind energy leases in the WEA. The EA will also consider project easements associated with each potential lease issued, and grants for subsea cable corridors through state tidelands.

As part of BOEM's scoping process, BOEM is seeking public comments on what should be considered as part of the EA. BOEM also will use these comments as input for its

consultation under section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Additional information on how to comment can be found at <https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/state-activities/humboldt-wind-energy-area>.

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The Department of the Interior's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) is responsible for America's offshore energy and mineral resources. The bureau promotes energy independence, environmental protection and economic development through responsible, science-based management of energy and mineral resources on the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf.