

NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION • VIRGINIA CONSERVATION NETWORK

Obama Administration Hits the Accelerator for Responsible Offshore Wind Development

National Wildlife Federation and Virginia Conservation Network applaud Bureau of Ocean Energy Management for expediting responsible offshore wind energy permitting

WASHINGTON, DC (February 2, 2012) Today, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), the agency responsible for permitting offshore wind energy, has hit the accelerator in the pursuit of this massive, domestic clean energy source.

In releasing the Final Environmental Assessment for commercial wind leasing and site assessment activities on the Mid-Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf, BOEM has effectively cut at least two years off the permitting process for offshore wind off the coasts of Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey and Virginia. Once an auction process is completed, it is expected that numerous leases will be issued in 2012, allowing critical data to be collected for the development of construction and operations plans for offshore wind projects in these areas. Wind developers will be asked to follow environmental stipulations to protect sensitive wildlife once out on the water and a project-specific environmental review process will still be needed down the road.

Responses to today's announcement:

“National Wildlife Federation applauds the Obama Administration for hitting the accelerator in the pursuit of responsible offshore wind energy in the Mid-Atlantic region,” said Catherine Bowes, Senior Policy Representative for the **National Wildlife Federation**. “By expediting the permitting process for responsible offshore wind energy without sacrificing critical environmental review, America is one step closer to harnessing the massive economic and environmental benefits that will come from tapping this immense domestic clean energy source.”

"Offshore wind power has the potential to create of hundreds of new manufacturing jobs in Hampton Roads, Virginia," said Nathan Lott, Executive Director for the **Virginia Conservation Network**. "The shift to clean energy will protect that region from rising sea levels caused by climate change. The private sector has a critical role to play. Wind developers deserve a clarity and timeliness in leasing and permitting. BOEM's announcement is a very welcome step forward."

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