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U.S. Department of the Interior



Press Release

Salazar Signs Agreement with 10 East Coast Governors to Establish Atlantic Offshore Wind Energy Consortium

Announces New Atlantic Offshore Renewable Energy Office

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WASHINGTON, DC – Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and the governors of 10 East Coast states today signed a Memorandum of Understanding that formally establishes an Atlantic Offshore Wind Energy Consortium to promote the efficient, orderly, and responsible development of wind resources on the Outer Continental Shelf.

Salazar announced the agreement at Capitol Hill Oceans Week 2010, where he also announced the establishment of a new regional renewable energy office to coordinate and appropriately expedite the development of wind, solar and other renewable energy resources on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf. The

office will be located in Virginia so as to be convenient to all states.

"I am very pleased to be joining with the governors of Atlantic coastal states to promote the safe and environmentally responsible development of the exceptional wind energy resources off our coasts," Salazar said. "Appropriate development of Outer Continental Shelf wind power will enhance regional and national energy security and create American jobs through the development of energy markets and investments in renewable energy technologies."

Several wind energy projects for the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf have been proposed for East Coast states, positioning the region to tap into the enormous potential of wind power in the U.S. Developing this resource could create thousands of manufacturing, construction and operations jobs and displace older, inefficient fossil-fueled generating plants, helping significantly to combat climate change.

"Renewable energy resources hold great economic promise," Salazar said. "By one estimate, if our nation fully pursues its potential for wind energy on land and offshore, wind can generate as much as 20 percent of our electricity by 2030 and create a quarter-million jobs in the process."

Salazar announced during a February 19, 2010, meeting with governors and representatives of Atlantic coast states that he was forming a consortium to discuss a regional approach to wind energy development on the Outer Continental Shelf. All Atlantic coast states were invited to join. The Memorandum of Understanding was signed by Secretary Salazar and the governors of Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina.

Together, the department and the Atlantic governors will use this agreement to facilitate federal-state cooperation for commercial wind development on the Outer Continental Shelf off of the Atlantic coast through collaborative efforts on issues of mutual interest. Under the Memorandum of Understanding, the consortium will develop an action plan that sets forth priorities, goals, specific recommendations and steps for achieving the objectives outlined in the agreement.

Interior's new Bureau of Ocean Energy Management will oversee the development of wind and other renewable energy resources on the Outer Continental Shelf. In addition to cooperation with the governors, Interior will continue to work with local, state, tribal and federal stakeholders to facilitate the commercial leasing process for offshore renewable energy development through inter-governmental task forces.

Task forces have been formally established with Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Virginia, Delaware, and Maryland, and are in process for New York, South Carolina, and Florida.

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