

Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission
June 14, 2023

Agenda Item: 3c
Topic: Offshore Wind Planning Update
Presented by: Chris Havel

Information

Background:

The Federal Agency in charge of offshore wind development in the United States is the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM). The mission of BOEM is to “manage the development of U.S. Outer Continental Shelf energy and mineral resources in an environmentally and economically responsible way.” BOEM’s jurisdiction begins outside of Oregon’s Territorial Sea which extends from the shoreline out to three nautical miles (Figure 1). Given the depth of the seafloor outside of Oregon’s Territorial Sea, wind technology off our coast must rely on floating wind turbines in arrays offshore, connected by mooring lines to the seafloor. Electrical cables will be required to transmit the power to shore, with cables running under the Ocean Shore State Recreation Area to connect to the terrestrial electrical system.

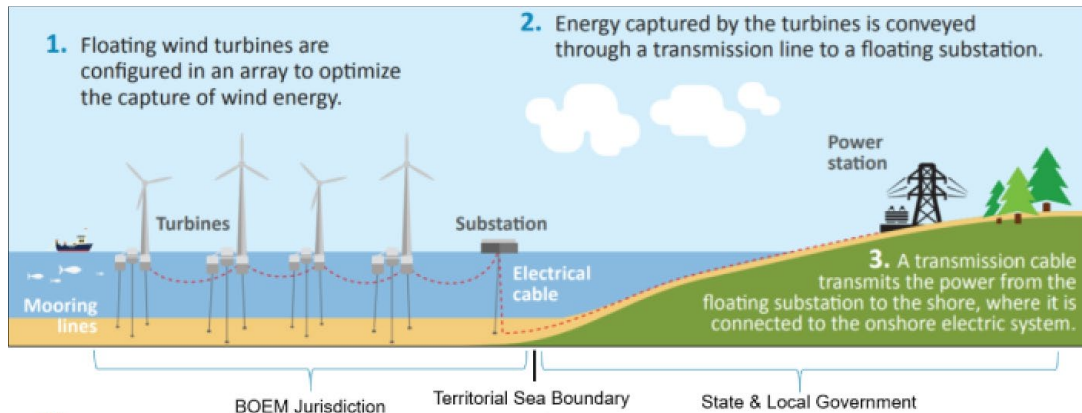


Figure 1. Offshore Wind Energy Farm Diagram (Source: BOEM)

BOEM has identified several nationwide goals for offshore wind including the deployment of 30 gigawatts of offshore wind by 2030 and 15 gigawatts of *floating* offshore wind by 2035. Figure 2 helps illustrate where fixed bottom (yellow) vs. floating offshore wind (blue) has the potential to occur.



Figure 2. Nationwide offshore wind resources by structure type for the United States (Source: NREL)

A proposed timeline for Oregon identifies us near the end of the planning and analysis phase (Figure 3). This phase began when BOEM initiated an intergovernmental task force made up of Tribal, State, and local governments and other federal agencies which met for the first time in September 2019 to discuss the general planning approach. Following that meeting, BOEM and the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) drafted a data gathering and engagement plan. The task force met again in June 2020 to discuss the draft plan. In October 2021 the group met to discuss the outcomes of Plan implementation and next steps in the leasing process. A final summary report was published in January 2022 and is available online at boem.gov/Oregon. In early 2022 the group met to discuss next steps in BOEM’s authorization process including the identification of proposed “Call Areas.”



Figure 3. BOEM Offshore Wind Energy Authorization Process Timeline (Source: BOEM)

BOEM initiated a “Call for Information” in April, 2022 to help with area identification and environmental reviews. During this process they have since winnowed the proposed Call Areas down from three (including one offshore of Bandon) to those two shown in Figure 4, one offshore Coos Bay and one offshore Brookings. The stated goal is to have approximately three gigawatts for the first leasing activities offshore Oregon, which according to BOEM is less than ¼ of the current Call Areas. The Call Areas, which have already been reduced to eliminate a large area of the Coos Bay Call Area identified by the

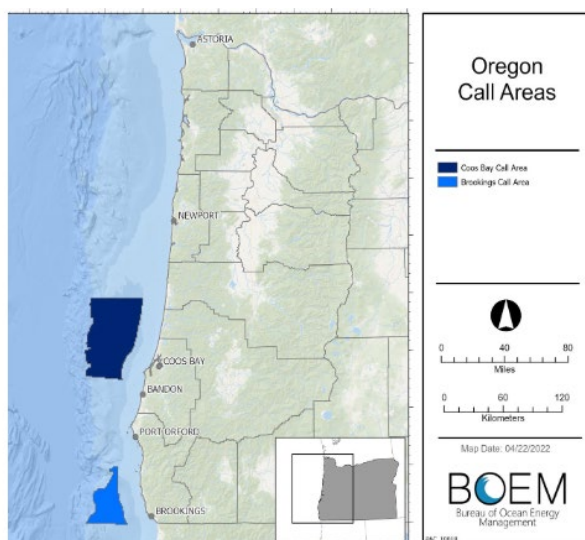


Figure 4. Oregon Offshore Wind Call Areas, 2023 (SOURCE: BOEM)

Department of Defense and U.S. Coast Guard constraints, will be further refined to wind energy areas (WEAs) in the next six months or so. A potential lease sale is slated in the next few years for Federal waters offshore Oregon.

During multiple task force meetings and during the “Call for Information” OPRD staff and other parties, including several of Oregon’s Tribes provided feedback about the need for visualization simulations to demonstrate the potential impacts on the viewsheds of Oregon’s coastal areas. While the Call Areas are quite a distance offshore (approximately 13.8 miles at the closest point), the potential offshore floating wind structures are larger than any of the current onshore wind turbines in the United States (Figure 5). Based on visualization studies done for Call Areas elsewhere (e.g., New York and California), the structures are likely to be visible from the Oregon Coast.

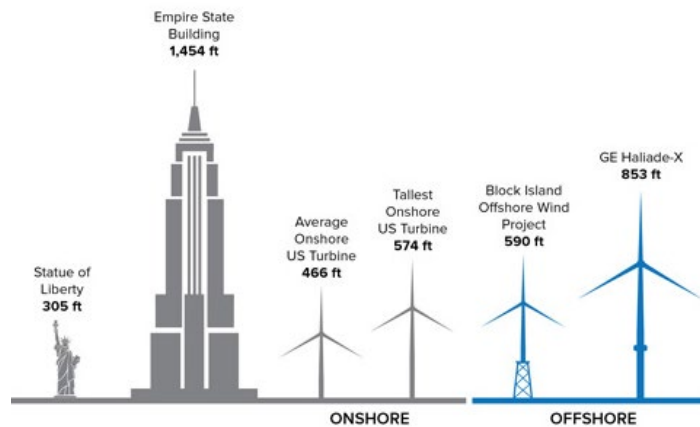


Figure 5. Source: NYSERDA

In the last six months BOEM has hired a contractor to conduct simulations of hypothetical wind projects from six locations that overlook the two proposed Call Areas offshore of Oregon. Draft visualization products should be available in the next few months.

Prior Action by the Commission: None
Action Requested: None
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