

Timeline of History of Offshore Wind in Maine

GMRI hosts a conference in Lincolnville, Maine to bring together people from all over the country to discuss the potential for offshore wind in the Gulf of Maine.

2006

Former Maine Governor, John Baldacci, establishes the Ocean Energy Task Force (OETF) to recommend a strategy for advancing the development of renewable ocean energy resources in the Gulf of Maine.

The University of Maine began research on floating offshore wind technologies as a solution for design challenges with traditional offshore wind turbines in the Gulf of Maine's deep water environment.

Nov 2008

2008

Ocean Energy Task Force publishes a final report that reconciled state agency laws to allow for ocean energy to exist in state waters and recommended that the state designate up to 5 offshore wind research sites along Maine's coast.

The University of Maine receives \$10.7 million from the U.S. Department of Energy for two six megawatt floating offshore wind demonstration pilot projects south of Monhegan Island.

2009

2009-2010

The Maine Public Utilities Commission pursues an agreement for the purchase and sale of renewable energy from the University of Maine's pilot project.

Former Maine Governor, Paul LePage, signs an executive order prohibiting state agencies from issuing permits "related to wind turbines".

2014

Jan 2018

New Hampshire Governor, Christopher Sununu, requested that the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) establish an intergovernmental offshore wind renewable energy Task Force for the state. Given the regional nature of offshore wind energy development, BOEM decided to establish a Gulf of Maine Task Force – including representation from New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Maine and federally recognized Tribes in the area.

Jan 2019

Maine Governor, Janet Mills, signs an executive order that reverses the January 2018 moratorium on wind energy permits.

Feb 2019

Governor Mills launches the Maine Offshore Wind Initiative which encompasses the Maine Offshore Wind Roadmap, the Gulf of Maine Research Array, the Searsport Study, and contributing to the BOEM Task Force.

The state releases its Maine Economic Development Strategy, 2020-2029, identifying offshore wind as a critical opportunity to grow Maine's economy.

Jun 2019

Nov 2019

Dec 12, 2019

First BOEM Gulf of Maine Task Force Meeting.

The University of Maine partners with New England Aqua Ventus to develop a single 11 MW turbine demonstration project off of Monhegan Island with cable work and construction set to begin in 2024, advancing Maine Public Utilities Commission agreement.

Jun 2020

Governor Mills announces plan to create the country's first floating offshore wind research array in the Gulf of Maine. The University of Maine and New England Aqua Ventus will partner on the technology development and deployment in the research array.

Nov 2020

Biden Administration announces a new federal target of 30 gigawatts of offshore wind energy by 2030.

Mar 2021

Maine passes a law that allows Maine Public Utilities Commission to negotiate a power purchase agreement for the research array.

Jun 2021

Maine passes a law to create the Maine Offshore Wind Research Consortium to develop and oversee research priorities for the floating research array.

Jun 2021

Jul 2021

Governor Mills signs legislation prohibiting offshore wind development in state waters, which extend 3 miles offshore.

The U.S. Department of the Interior announces plans to advance commercial-scale offshore wind, including in the Gulf of Maine, in coming years.

Oct 2021

Apr 2022

BOEM announces Gulf of Maine Planning Area.

BOEM hosts the second Gulf of Maine Task Force Meeting.

May 19, 2022

Aug 2022

BOEM issues a Request for Interest (RFI) and a Request for Competitive Interest (RFCI) as the first steps in the commercial leasing process to indicate areas where the wind industry is interested in development. A 60-day public comment period on these areas opens.

BOEM identifies the Draft Call Area and issues the determination of no competitive interest for the Maine Research Lease Application, paving the way for the research array (of up to 12 turbines) to move forward and begin an environmental review process.

Jan 2023

Jan 2023

BOEM holds a series of in-person and virtual meetings to solicit feedback and begin revising the draft Call Area.

BOEM publishes the Final Call Area.

Apr 2023

May 10-11, 2023

BOEM holds Gulf of Maine Task Force Meeting.

45 day public comment period on the Final Call Area to identify areas that may not be suitable for development.

Apr 26-Jun 12, 2023

July 2023

BOEM hosted in-person meetings in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine to seek feedback and on-the-water knowledge from the Gulf of Maine fishing community to improve the spatial models used to inform draft Wind Energy Areas.

FUTURE TIMELINE

BOEM designates draft Wind Energy Areas.

The Wind Energy Area (WEA) is an offshore area that seems most suitable for wind energy development based on assessing multiple factors including conflicts with existing uses, natural resources and wind energy potential.

BOEM will winnow the Call Area to determine WEAs which will then be divided into lease areas.

Oct/Nov 2023

Late 2023

BOEM will hold engagement meetings to solicit feedback on draft WEAs during a 30-day public comment period.

BOEM designates Wind Energy Areas.

Early 2024

BOEM holds Lease Sale (Proposed Sale Notice, Final Sale Notice, Hold Auction).

The Proposed Sale Notice (PSN) contains information pertaining to the lease areas, certain lease provisions and conditions, auction details, criteria for evaluating competing bids, and procedures for lease award, appeals, and lease execution. BOEM receives and analyzes public comment on the PSN to inform the Final Sale Notice. Developers interested in participating in the auction must follow the criteria outlined in the Final Sale Notice.

2024

BOEM holds pre-survey meetings/ planning for Site Assessment Plan.

Developers must submit a Site Assessment Plan (SAP) to BOEM to show how the developer will characterize and assess the lease site. The SAP must be approved by BOEM before assessment and survey work can occur.

2025

Developers conduct site assessment and survey work required by BOEM as part of the formal environmental impact assessment process.

2025-2030

Developers conduct site assessment and survey work to characterize the lease area.

Construction and Operations Plans submitted.

Developers must submit a Construction and Operations Plan (COP) to BOEM that describes planned construction, operations, and conceptual decommissioning under the commercial lease, including the project easement.

2026-2030