

The NewsRoom**Release:** #4052**Date:** December 08, 2009**MMS and Virginia Hold Offshore Renewable Energy Task Force Meeting***People Promoting Energy, the Environment, and the Economy*

Virginia Beach, VA – The Department of the Interior’s Minerals Management Service (MMS) today held its first task force meeting with officials from Virginia to discuss renewable energy development on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). The MMS is establishing inter-governmental task forces to consult with local, state, tribal and federal stakeholders concerning renewable energy commercial leasing and development on the OCS.

The task force includes state government officials, officials from affected federal agencies, elected local government officials, and tribal leaders. MMS is working with the task force to facilitate the commercial leasing process for OCS renewable energy development offshore Virginia.

"The MMS Virginia Task Force will provide a forum for efficient review of proposed renewable energy projects on the OCS to move toward the goal of expanding our nation’s energy resource portfolio in an environmentally sound manner, while being responsive to the needs of affected States, localities, and tribes," said MMS Director Liz Birnbaum. "MMS looks forward to the input, advice, and participation of this task force as we initiate planning for commercial renewable energy leasing offshore Virginia."

Virginia Governor Tim Kaine said "We are pleased to work with the Minerals Management Service to facilitate development of wind power in waters offshore Virginia. Offshore wind promises to be a clean source of power to meet Virginian’s needs in future years."

The task force charter was presented during the meeting, along with a discussion by MMS officials of the commercial leasing process for OCS renewable energy.

The task force members also discussed options for starting the leasing process off Virginia and specific actions and timelines to support Virginia’s goal of developing offshore renewable energy.

In April 2009, President Barack Obama announced that the MMS finalized the framework for renewable energy development on the OCS. This framework establishes

the process for granting leases, easements, and rights-of-way for offshore renewable energy development activities, such as siting and construction of wind generation facilities on the OCS. The framework also provides for MMS’s use of

task forces in carrying out its responsibilities for authorizing OCS renewable energy activities in partnership with state, local, and tribal governments, and Federal agencies. Task force meetings were recently held with Delaware, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and New Jersey.

News Media Contact:

PublicAffairs@boem.gov

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