

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.

Nov 2008

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.

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.

2009

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.

2009-2010

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

2014

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

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.

Jun 2019

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

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.

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 19, 2023

BOEM holds [Wind Energy Area engagement meetings](#).

During the 30-day public comment period following the WEA designation, BOEM held a series of virtual meetings to outline the draft WEA and discuss next steps. These included a general public meeting; fisheries meetings on recreational and highly migratory species, mobile gear, and fixed gear and scallop fishery; a environmental non-governmental organizations (eNGOs) meeting; and a shipping and commercial maritime meeting.

Oct-Nov 2023

BOEM designates Gulf of Maine Wind Energy Areas.

Mar 15, 2024

BOEM announces the Proposed Sale Notice.

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. The PSN included a 60-day public comment period, during which [BOEM held multiple in-person and virtual public meetings](#) to review aspects of the PSN, answer questions, and gather public comment.

May 1 - Jul 1, 2024

BOEM announces the Final Sale Notice.

Feedback gathered throughout the PSN public comment period was incorporated into the Final Sale Notice.

Sep 16, 2024

Lease sale announced.

BOEM announces results of the Gulf of Maine Offshore Wind Energy Lease Sale.

The auction resulted in two winners of four [lease areas](#) with total final bids amounting to over \$21.9 million. Avangrid Renewables, LLC was awarded Lease OCS-A 0564, which is 98,565 acres at \$4,928,250, and Lease OCS-A 0568, which is 124,897 acres at \$6,244,850. Both areas are approximately 29.5 nautical miles (nm) from Massachusetts. Invenergy NE Offshore Wind, LLC was awarded Lease OCS-A 0562, which is 97,854 acres at \$4,892,700, and is approximately 56.2 nm from Maine, and Lease OCS-A 0567, which is 117,780 acres at \$5,889,000 approximately 21.6nm from Massachusetts.

Oct 16, 2024

The Department of the Interior [announced it would hold an offshore wind energy lease sale](#) on October 29, 2024 for eight areas in the Gulf of Maine. The eight areas have capacity for approximately 13 gigawatts of wind energy.

Oct 29, 2024

The White House issues a memorandum titled *"Temporary Withdrawal of All Areas on the Outer Continental Shelf from Offshore Wind Leasing and Review of the Federal Government's Leasing and Permitting Practices for Wind Projects"*.

Jan 20, 2025

This withdrawal temporarily prevents consideration of any area in the Outer Continental Shelf for any new or renewed wind energy leasing for the purposes of generation of electricity or any other such use derived from the use of wind. The withdrawal does not apply to oil, gas, minerals, and environmental conservation.

Avangrid submits a [Fisheries Communication Plan \(FCP\)](#).

A FCP is an outline of outreach and engagement strategies between offshore wind developers and fishery stakeholders who may be affected during the planning, construction, operation, or decommissioning of wind arrays. FCPs are required to be submitted to BOEM during the site assessment process. Invenergy is finalizing its FCP.

Apr 24, 2025

BOEM rescinds all designated Wind Energy Areas (WEAs) on the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf.

WEAs were originally established to identify offshore locations deemed most suitable for wind energy development. This does not rescind the four lease areas that have already been awarded in the Gulf of Maine, nor any other awarded lease areas on the Outer Continental Shelf. It also does not rescind the Maine Research Lease.

Aug 30, 2025

FUTURE TIMELINE 2025-2030

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.

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

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.