FINDING OF NO NEW SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONNSI)
Issuance of Lease for Offshore Wind Power Facility in Nantucket Sound, Offshore Massachusetts

In January 2009, the U.S. Department of the Interior, Minerals Management Service (MMS) prepared and filed with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) covering the construction, operation, and decommissioning of the proposed Cape Wind Energy Project, an offshore wind power facility consisting of 130, 3.6± megawatt (MW) wind turbine generators (WTGs), each with a maximum blade height of 440 feet, to be arranged in a grid pattern on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) in Nantucket Sound (Proposed Action). The Proposed Action would be located in an area referred to as Horseshoe Shoal, offshore of the state of Massachusetts. The FEIS analyzed the environmental effects of the Proposed Action and 13 alternatives to the Proposed Action on biological, physical, socioeconomic and cultural resources within the project areas.

The MMS has identified new information that has become available since the publication of the FEIS in January, 2009, that pertains to the proposed project, the feasibility of alternatives to the proposed project, and to some of the resources that were analyzed in the FEIS. The MMS used an environmental assessment (EA) to determine whether it needs to supplement its existing analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This EA, in accordance with CEQ regulations, examined whether the new information indicated that there were "substantial changes in the proposed action that are relevant to environmental concerns" or "significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed action or its impacts" that either were not fully discussed or did not exist at the time the FEIS was prepared (40 CFR 1502.9). The MMS examined information obtained from the scientific/technical literature, government reports and actions, intergovernmental coordination and communications, required consultations, and comments made during comment periods after the FEIS was circulated to determine whether any assumptions, data or analysis in the FEIS should be reevaluated or if the new information would alter any conclusions of the FEIS. This information included any new information in the January 13, 2010, MMS Documentation of Section 106 Finding of Adverse Effect (Revised) (Revised Finding), as well as comments submitted to MMS during the 30 day comment periods after the issuance of the Revised Finding and the Cape Wind Environmental Assessment published on March 8, 2010. The EA has been revised for clarity in response to these comments received. No new information was found that would necessitate a re-analysis of range of the alternatives or the kinds, levels, or locations of the impacts of the Proposed Action on biologic, physical, or cultural socioeconomic resources. The analyses, potential impacts, and conclusions detailed in the FEIS remain applicable and valid. Therefore, the MMS has determined that a supplemental EIS is not required and is issuing this FONNSI.

Supporting Document

The Final Environmental Impact Statement for Cape Wind Energy Project, Final Environmental Impact Statement, January 2009 (USDOI, MMS, 2009) (available upon request or at http://www.mms.gov/offshore/RenewableEnergy/CapeWindFEIS.htm).

Dr. James Kendall
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04/28/10
Date