

Fact Sheet on Atlantic Wind Connection

Project Description:

- Atlantic Grid Holdings, LLC, has requested a right-of-way grant to construct the Atlantic Wind Connection, a high-voltage, direct-current subsea transmission system – the first such offshore infrastructure proposed in the United States – that would collect power generated by wind turbine facilities off the coasts of New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia.
- The system’s parallel circuits would total about 790 miles in length, enabling up to 7,000 megawatts of wind turbine capacity to be delivered to the regional high-voltage grid.
- The major investors in the Atlantic Wind Connection proposal are Google, Inc., Good Energies II, LP, Marubeni Corporation and Elia.
- The proposed transmission line would be constructed in phases to connect offshore wind power to the grid based on the company’s estimates of when offshore wind generation facilities will be in place.
- A right-of-way grant occupies a corridor 200 feet wide, centered on the cable with additional widths at the hubs. The right-of-way grant corridor is anticipated to extend about 790 statute miles. Full construction of all phases of the project would take about 10 years.

Today’s Action:

- Following a 60-day open comment period and request for competitive interest, BOEM has determined there is no overlapping competitive interest in the proposed right-of-way grant area off the Mid-Atlantic coast for offshore wind energy transmission line.
- The decision clears the way for an environmental impact study on granting the sole interested company, Atlantic Grid Holdings, LLC, a right-of-way for project development.

Next Regulatory Steps:

- The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) will process the Atlantic Wind Connection request for a right-of-way grant noncompetitively and anticipates moving directly to an environmental impact statement that would consider the potential impacts of all five phases of the project as connected actions.
- By regulation, within 60 days of today’s notice of no competitive interest, the company must submit a General Activities Plan (GAP) describing all facility construction and related activities for the project.
- When BOEM receives a completed GAP, it will conduct technical and environmental reviews of the plan. If a right-of-way grant is issued, it will remain in effect for as long as transmission operations are conducted in accordance with the GAP.

Interior's Renewable Energy Initiative:

- Today's announcement is part of the Obama Administration's coordinated strategy to develop all appropriate sources of renewable and conventional energy on U.S. public lands. That plan calls for development of onshore and offshore renewable energy under a 'Smart from the Start' approach that prioritizes and processes existing applications in a coordinated, focused manner with full environmental analysis and public review.
- Onshore, since 2009, Interior has authorized 30 large-scale renewable energy projects on public lands, including 16 solar facilities, 6 wind farms, and 8 geothermal plants. When completed, these projects will provide more than 6,500 megawatts of power to communities across the West, enough to power more than 2 million homes. Prior to 2009, there were no solar energy projects permitted on public lands.
- Offshore, BOEM has worked closely with state, tribal and local stakeholders and industry to develop and implement a regulatory framework for ocean wind, wave and current energy development and identified several Wind Energy Areas along the Mid-Atlantic OCS that have the highest potential wind resources and fewest competing use conflicts. Focusing development in these pre-approved areas will expedite the development of the region's ample wind resources.
- Secretary Salazar also has approved and signed a commercial wind lease with Cape Wind Associates to develop the first wind farm in federal waters – offshore Massachusetts. The project could generate enough clean power to meet 75 percent of the electricity demand of communities along the shoreline of Nantucket Sound.
- Deploying clean, renewable offshore wind energy will help meet the President's goal of generating 80 percent of the Nation's electricity from clean energy sources by 2035. That plan calls for developing 10 gigawatts of offshore wind capacity (including along Atlantic, Pacific and Gulf coasts as well as in Great Lakes and Hawaiian waters) by 2020 and 54 gigawatts by 2030. Those levels of development would produce enough energy to power 2.8 million and 15.2 million average American homes, respectively. Offshore Atlantic winds alone could produce an estimated 1,000 gigawatts of energy.
- Interior's efforts are coordinated with the Department of Energy and other federal agencies in the first-ever interagency plan on offshore wind energy development, known as the *National Offshore Wind Strategy: Creating an Offshore Wind Industry in the United States*. The initiative demonstrates a strong federal family commitment to expeditiously develop a sustainable, world-class offshore wind industry in a way that reduces conflict with other ocean uses and protects resources.

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