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BOEM to Conduct Environmental Review of Renewable Energy Demonstration Project Offshore Oregon

Agency Seeks Public Comment; Public Meetings to be Held in Coos Bay

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As part of the Obama Administration's Climate Action Plan to create American jobs, develop domestic clean energy sources and cut carbon pollution, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) announced today that it is seeking public comment as it prepares an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze potential impacts of a proposed wind energy demonstration project offshore the coast of Oregon.

Principle Power, Inc. (Principle Power) has requested a wind energy commercial lease from BOEM. The company proposes to design, develop and demonstrate a grid-connected, 30-megawatt (MW) offshore wind pilot demonstration project on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) offshore Coos Bay, Oregon.

Tomorrow, BOEM will publish a "Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Assessment" for the proposed project in the Federal Register for a 60-day public comment period. BOEM will accept comments through July 28, 2014, in any of the following ways:

Through the federal portal www.regulations.gov, reference docket number BOEM-2014-0050;
Through the BOEM website at www.boem.gov/Public-Engagement-Opportunities/ ; or
Through letters sent through the U.S. Postal Service or other delivery service: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
Pacific OCS Region
Attention: Greg Sanders, Office of the Environment
770 Paseo Camarillo, 2nd Floor
Camarillo, California 93010

BOEM will also hold two public meetings in Coos Bay, Oregon on June 17, 2014, to solicit comments on the scope of the EA. The meetings will be an open house format. Subject-matter experts from both BOEM and Principle Power will staff topic stations to answer questions and BOEM will collect comments. The open house meetings will be held from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. PDT on Tuesday, June 17, 2014, at the following location:

Coos Bay Public Library
525 Anderson Avenue
Coos Bay, Oregon 97420

The proposed Wind Float Pacific Project is one of three "Offshore Wind Demonstration Projects" that will receive up to $47 million each from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) as part of DOE's effort to lower costs and establish a domestic offshore wind industry. Principle Power, which received an initial $4 million from DOE for the project in December 2012, submitted an unsolicited request to BOEM for a commercial wind energy lease in May 2013.

Today's announcement builds on BOEM's recent activities to grow offshore renewable energy through the leasing of wind energy areas. BOEM has awarded five commercial wind energy leases off the Atlantic coast: two non-competitive leases (Cape Wind in Nantucket Sound and an area off Delaware) and three competitive leases (two offshore Massachusetts-Rhode Island and another offshore Virginia). BOEM expects to hold additional competitive auctions for wind energy areas offshore Maryland, Massachusetts and New Jersey in the coming year.

Before Principle Power can install any facilities on the OCS, it must obtain BOEM approval. Principle Power will submit a plan to site its project within a 15 square-mile proposed lease area off the Oregon coast. The project is designed to generate electricity from five floating "WindFloat" units, each equipped with a 6-megawatt offshore wind turbine and moored to the seabed with multiple anchors. The turbines would be connected to a single electrical transmission cable running along the seafloor to shore.

The proposed facility, sited in about 1,400 feet of water, would be the first wind project in federal waters off the West Coast, and the first in the nation to use a floating structure to support offshore wind generation.

The Environmental Assessment for which BOEM is now seeking public comment will consider the environmental consequences associated with the activities and facilities proposed for the demonstration project (e.g., installation and operation of turbines and cables).

According to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, the West Coast holds an offshore capability of more than 800 gigawatts of wind energy potential, which is equivalent to more than three quarters of the nation's entire power generation capacity. Total U.S. deepwater wind energy resource potential is estimated to be nearly 2,000 gigawatts.

For more information about all renewable energy activities in federal waters offshore Oregon, click here.

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management promotes energy independence, environmental protection, and economic development through responsible, science-based management of offshore conventional and renewable energy resources.