

## **Request for Comment**

**October 21, 2022**

### **BOEM and NOAA Fisheries Draft North Atlantic Right Whale and Offshore Wind Strategy**

To support the Biden-Harris Administration's goals of advancing offshore wind energy production while protecting biodiversity and promoting ocean co-use, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) developed a joint Draft North Atlantic Right Whale and Offshore Wind Strategy to protect and promote the recovery of endangered North Atlantic right whales while responsibly developing offshore wind energy.

The strategy identifies three main goals (Mitigation and Decision-Support Tools; Research and Monitoring; and Collaboration, Communication and Outreach) and focuses on improving the science and integrating past, present, and future efforts related to North Atlantic right whales and offshore wind development. The draft strategy identifies approaches to mitigate and monitor offshore wind development impacts on North Atlantic right whales, which will help guide industry during the permitting process. The strategy also establishes the agencies' plans to engage stakeholders, partners and other ocean users on these issues. Following review of public comments, the strategy will be regularly evaluated and updated as new information becomes available.

The strategy does not define new policy or regulatory actions; rather, it recognizes efforts to date and identifies areas where BOEM and NOAA Fisheries will work together alongside our industry partners in an effort to focus on the information and science needed to responsibly develop offshore wind energy while protecting and recovering the North Atlantic Right Whale.

Offshore wind energy development plays an important role in U.S. efforts to combat the climate crisis and build a clean energy economy. The Biden-Harris Administration has set a goal of significantly increasing the nation's offshore wind energy capacity to 30 gigawatts by 2030. BOEM is the lead federal agency responsible for managing offshore energy exploration and development in the United States, while NOAA Fisheries is responsible for the stewardship of the nation's ocean resources and their habitat.

BOEM and NOAA Fisheries are soliciting public comment on the Draft North Atlantic Right Whale and Offshore Wind Strategy (see Supporting Documents in this Docket BOEM-2022-0066). The deadline to submit comments to help evaluate and improve this strategy is December 4, 2022.