

MA is Ready for Offshore Wind

This information sheet is designed to get you started with the information you need to understand the issues and begin the conversations. Each one of us has the power to add to our collective voice and move our communities toward equitable, just wind power.

In alignment with the state's 2050 Decarbonization Roadmap, we must shift off fossil fuels across all energy sectors to stop climate change and roll back pollution in our communities. Massachusetts has amazing wind resources offshore that can not only drive our state's transition off fossil fuels, but also create a strong new industry bringing in jobs and community benefits.

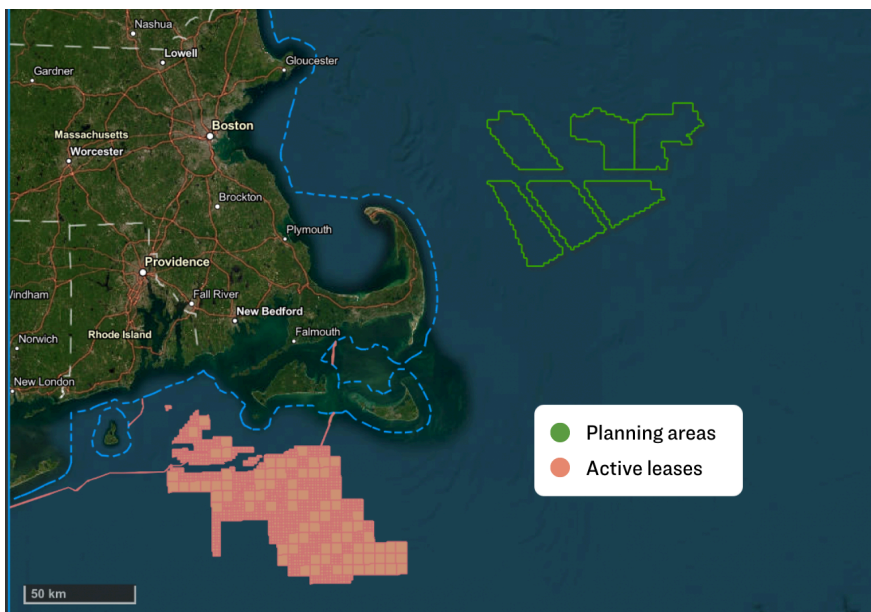
OFFSHORE WIND'S COMMUNITY IMPACTS

Massachusetts is a hub of present and planned offshore wind development activity. Projects include offshore turbines and substations, submarine cables and landings, onshore connections to the power grid, and port infrastructure.

Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) ensure that local interests are protected and that infrastructure development directly benefits host communities. CBAs should be created through close collaboration between developers, community groups, and officials, including diverse representation and Tribal consultation, so benefits are properly distributed, meet local needs, and address historical inequities.

OFFSHORE WIND PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

All offshore wind projects must progress through a series of leasing, siting, and permitting processes, as well as secure state-brokered power purchase agreements.



The **US Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM)** is the first step. BOEM coordinates technical, environmental, and community impact reviews of potential wind resource areas and proposed projects, and it issues leases and permits. Numerous federal, state, and local agencies also conduct reviews to ensure responsible development.

Photo credit: BOEM

As of mid March 2024, BOEM was defining areas suitable for offshore wind northeast of the Cape in the Gulf of Maine, and active projects south of the Cape were in various phases of development:

- South Fork Wind (full commercial operation)
- Vineyard Wind 1 (partial commercial operation)
- Revolution Wind (cable landing construction)
- Park City Wind, Commonwealth Wind, SouthCoast Wind, Sunrise Wind, Vineyard Northeast, Beacon Wind, and Bay State Wind (under development and permitting)

On March 27, 2024, four developers submitted bids in response to a tri-state offshore wind solicitation involving Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut:

- Avangrid: New England 1, 791 MW (formerly Park City Wind), submitted to all three states; and New England 2, 1080 MW (formerly Commonwealth Wind), also submitted to all three states.
- Vineyard Offshore: Vineyard Wind 2, 1200 MW, submitted to all three states.
- Ocean Winds: SouthCoast Wind, 1200 MW, submitted to all three states.
- Orsted: Starboard Wind, 1184 MW, submitted to CT and RI only.

In Massachusetts, the wind procurement process is managed by the **Department of Energy Resources**, with bid awards scheduled to be announced in early August. The **Department of Public Utilities** takes the lead in reviewing accepted bids and approving utility contracts. Once a project is selected and its contract is approved, the developer can seek to close financing, finalize permitting, and begin construction.

CONCLUSION

Across all of these review and approval processes, individual agencies, officials, towns, and municipalities retain significant influence and/or control with the ability to enable, delay, or prevent projects from moving forward.

Success or failure in negotiating CBAs can be determinative, which is why continued and visible local support for offshore wind—along with effective advocacy focused on localizing benefits within host communities and regions—is vital for getting offshore wind projects built and for meeting the Commonwealth’s near- and long-term climate policy commitments.

This information sheet was compiled by the Climate Research Team of the Massachusetts Chapter of the Sierra Club. If you have any questions or concerns or would like to connect about this campaign, please reach out to us!

✉ chapter@massachusetts.sierraclub.org

🌐 sierraclub.org/massachusetts/wind

