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BLOG

Coast Guard Announces Atlantic Coast Study Affecting Wind and Other Offshore Projects

MAY 11, 2011

The U.S. Coast Guard has announced that it is commencing today a Port Access Route Study to look at the need to maintain or change vessel routing measures along the U.S. eastern seaboard from Maine to Florida. The Coast Guard uses routing studies to decide where to place traffic separation schemes, exclusion areas, regulated navigation areas, aids to navigation, and other vessel routing controls. The studies are also used to guide the approval of offshore structures, such as wind turbines. The results of the current study will likely impact vessel operators and renewable energy companies by guiding regulatory approvals and restrictions related to the use of waters in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone for shipping and wind turbine installations. Among other things, the Port Access Route Study will likely attempt to reconcile competing interests affected by the announcement earlier this year by the Department of the Interior of four "Wind Energy Areas," along the coasts of New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia, located at the entrance to the Chesapeake Bay and the entrance and north and south approaches to the Delaware Bay, as shown in the map attached.

The Coast Guard is seeking comments and information from the public to assist with its study; it has identified a number of specific questions for which it seeks responses, and will also welcome other relevant comments and information. Comments are due by August 9, 2011, although the agency anticipates that the study will continue through to May 2012. A copy of the Notice is available **here**.

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