

## Department of Interior Launches “Smart from the Start” Offshore Wind Program

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Yesterday, Department of Interior (DOI) Secretary Ken Salazar **announced** implementation of the new “Smart from the Start” program to boost offshore wind project development off the Atlantic Coast of the United States. The program applies lessons learned by DOI in its public lands based solar energy initiative. First, it will eliminate a redundant step in the current regulatory permitting process which needlessly requires two findings of no competitive interest where there is only one developer interested in a project. Second, it will identify Wind Energy Areas (WEA) that are “most suitable for wind energy development.” Third, it will improve coordination with local, state, and federal agencies whose approvals are necessary for development.

Although not mentioned in the DOI announcement or fact sheet, federal maritime agencies, including the U.S. Coast Guard and the President’s National Ocean Council, have been carefully studying the challenges presented by multiple uses of the nation’s oceans. Therefore, DOI’s initiative to expedite offshore wind development would benefit mightily from incorporating the excellent analysis and **report** of these agencies addressing “coastal and marine spatial planning.” Additionally, DOI must engage in meaningful outreach to commercial users of the maritime space, including commercial vessel operations.

For additional information, please see the author’s recent **article** on offshore wind project regulatory approvals.

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