

# Maryland's Offshore Wind Energy Task Force Draft RFI Area Planning and Stakeholder Outreach

September 2009 – April 2011



## Maryland's Ocean is a Busy Place

- Our ocean and estuarine environments today face an era of unprecedented activity:
  - Sand is mined from the ocean to replenish beaches
  - Artificial reefs are created to provide fishing opportunities and fish habitat
  - We fish commercially and/or recreationally for sea bass, tautog, bluefish and flounder
  - Waterbirds and marine mammals feed and migrate along the Atlantic Coast
  - Unique cold-water corals, tilefish and living resources inhabit the ocean shelf and provide habitat
  - Ships use shipping lanes to move cargo
  - Telecommunication cables connect the globe
- Wind farms and other energy facilities, commercial fishing, diverse recreational uses, and shipping highways are all competing for use and space.



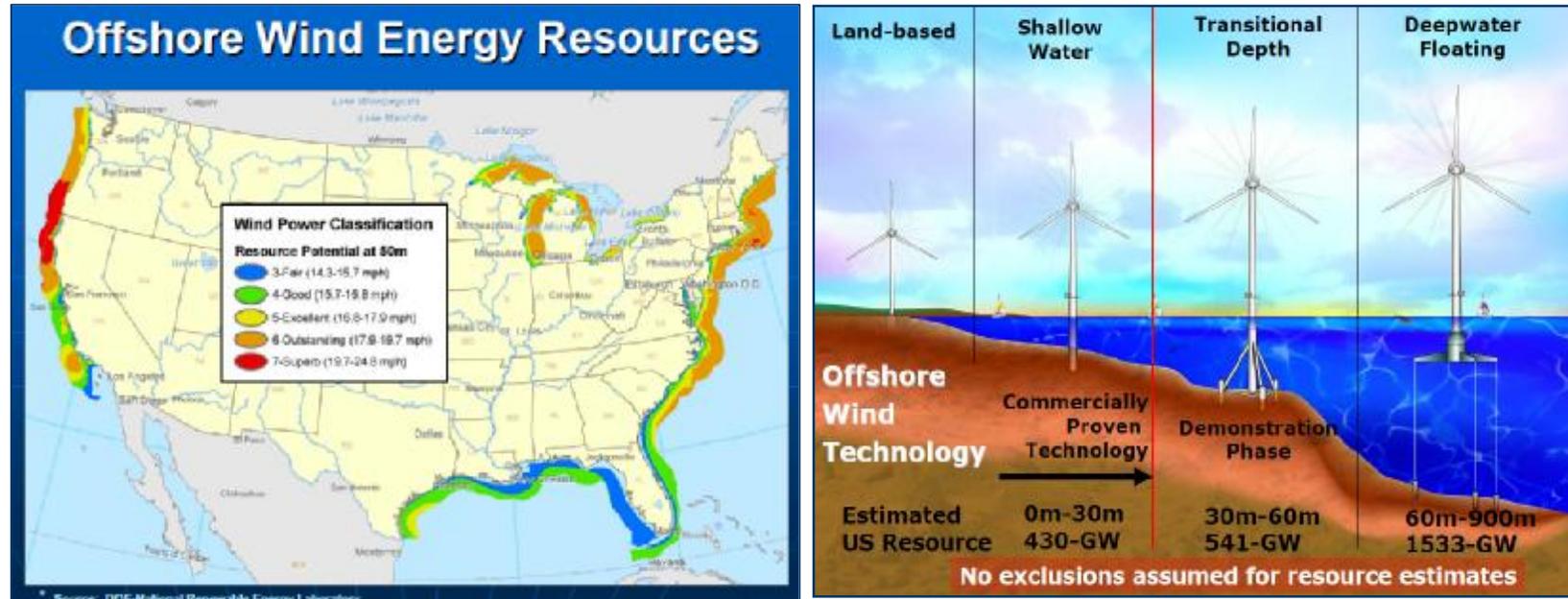
## Ocean Planning and Renewable Offshore Energy



Kentish Flats wind farm off the coast of England. Photo by Vattenfall

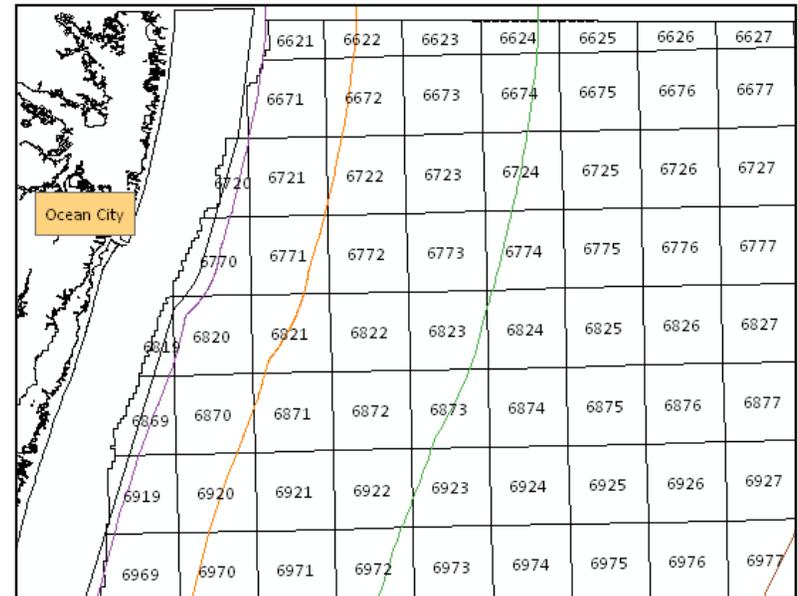
- Local, regional and national interest to obtain energy from renewable sources
- While working to streamline offshore wind energy development, it is important to ensure protection of our natural resources and existing ocean uses
- This presentation highlights Maryland's efforts to achieve this balance





The U.S. Energy Department estimates that Maryland's offshore area has "outstanding" wind energy potential that rivals or exceeds the Midwest land-based wind resources

- A state identifies interest in offshore wind energy to U.S. Department of Interior
  - A Inter-Governmental State/Federal/Local/Tribal Task Force is established
- A draft RFI area is developed
- Task Force members provide comment and negotiate an RFI boundary prior to announcement of RFI to solicit responses of interest

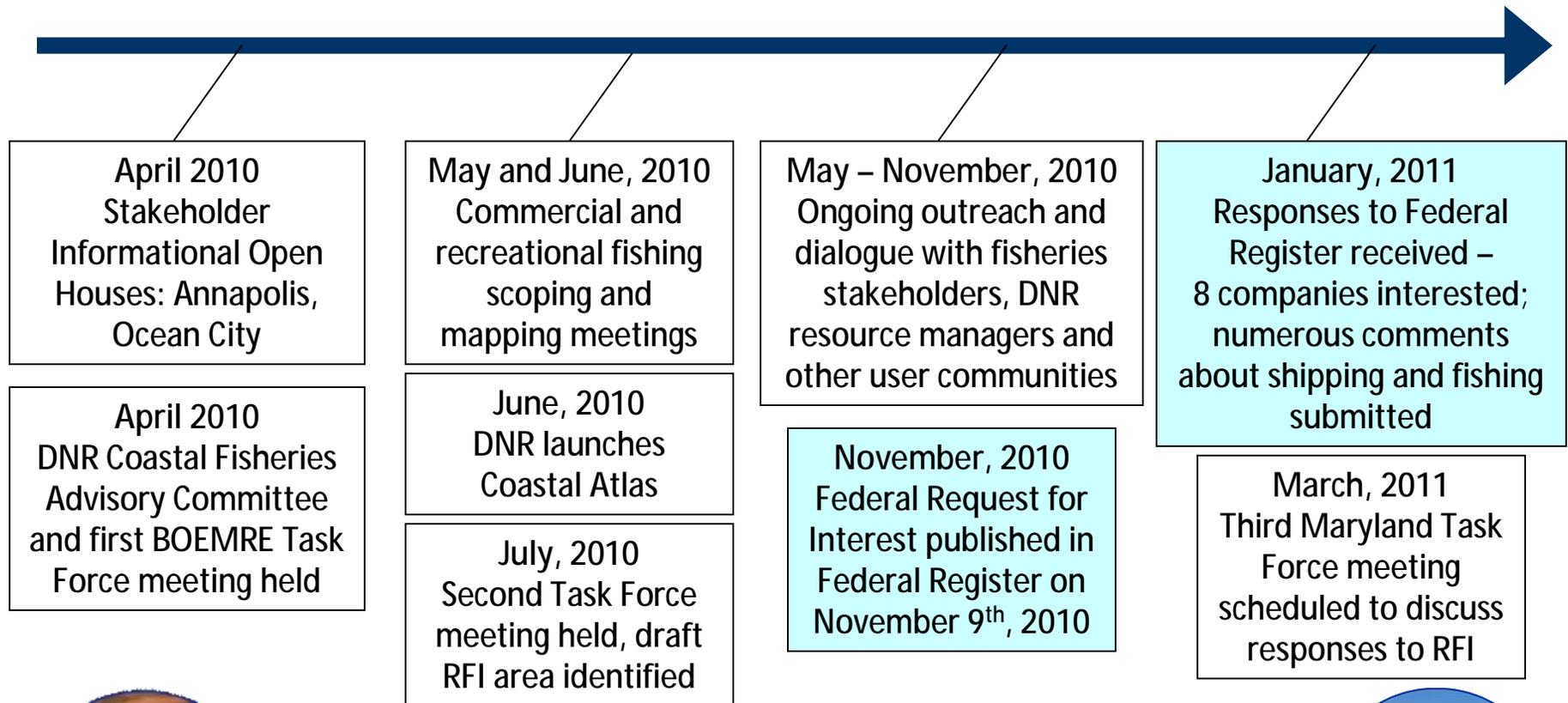


Offshore energy is leased by the Federal Government in what are called "Outer Continental Shelf blocks"



# MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

## Wind Planning & Stakeholder Outreach Timeline



*Each component designed to help ensure well-informed ocean siting and effective participation in the decision-making process for offshore wind energy development*





## Stakeholder Outreach

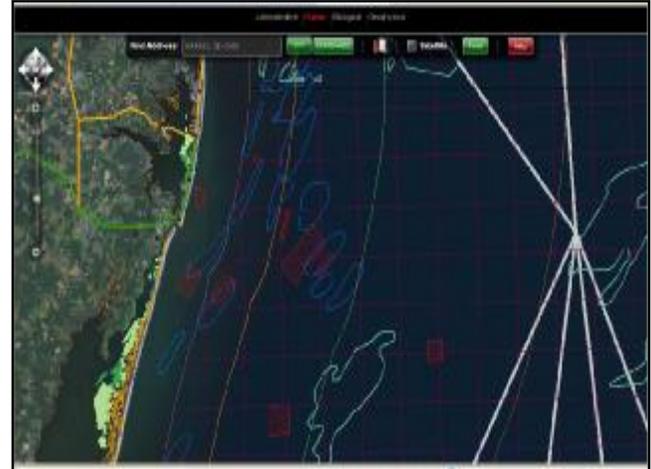
### *Goals of Maryland's Stakeholder Outreach:*

- To provide opportunities for the public and targeted user groups to learn more about what Maryland is doing related to offshore wind and get involved in the process to address questions and concerns
- To compile and organize data, information and feedback to help identify areas of high use and/or natural resource overlap to create a more transparent process

*...so that potential conflicts can be identified and be avoided early in the planning process*



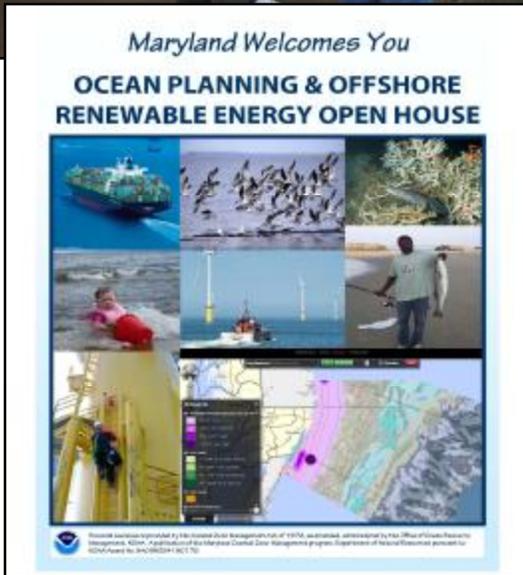
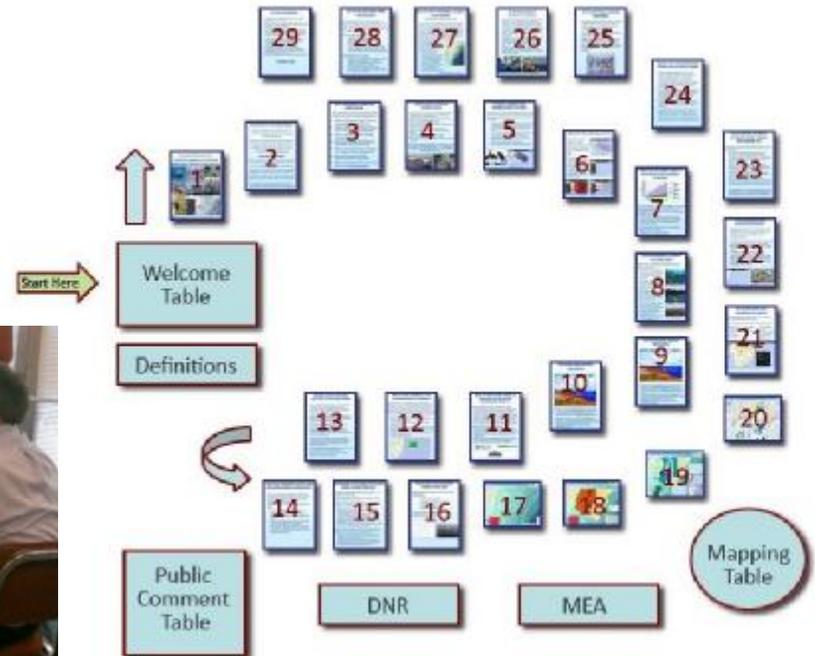
- Coastal Atlas assists users in identifying potential conflicts so that they can then be avoided early in the planning process.
- The tools currently available are designed to support better decision-making by compiling available data into one place where information can be tailored for specific issues.





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## Stakeholder Outreach – Open Houses




[oceanplanning@dnr.state.md.us](mailto:oceanplanning@dnr.state.md.us)



### One-on-One Interviews

- Local, community knowledge
- Historical, current and future use

### Mapping Mailers

- Varied distribution
  - Groundwork completed before group meetings

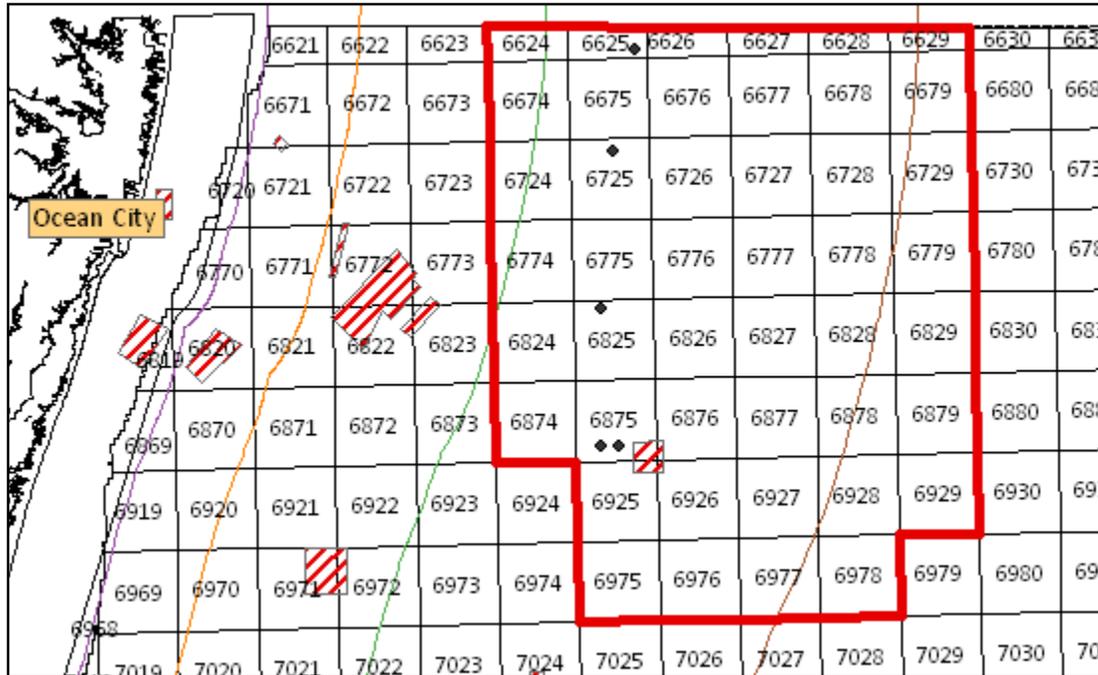
### User-group mapping

- Review existing maps
- Edit and identify areas



### *AND...* Issue-specific outreach with stakeholders and resource experts

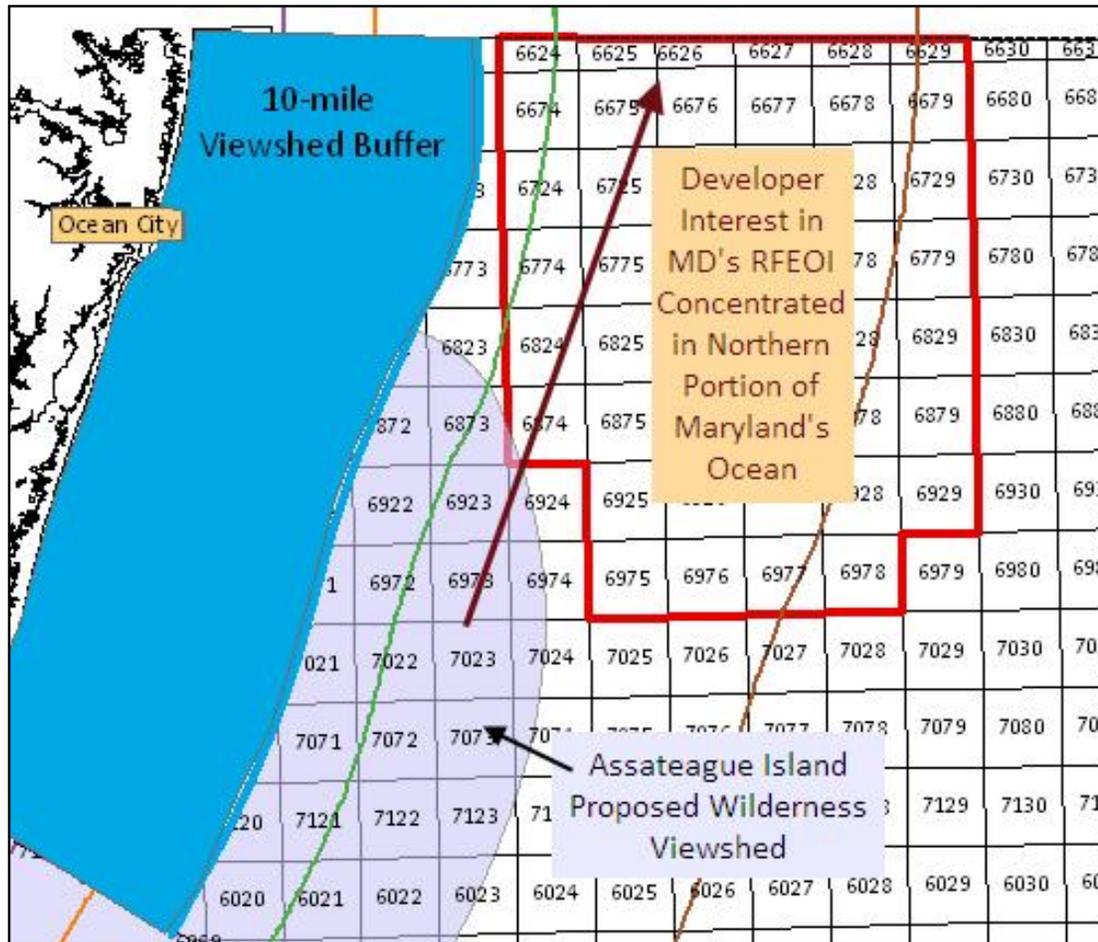
- Offshore Birds: DNR Wildlife & Heritage Service
- Artificial Reefs: DNR Fisheries, Maryland Geological Survey
- Fishery Resources and Tournaments: DNR Fisheries
- Marine Mammals: DNR Fish & Wildlife Health, marine mammals
- Bats: University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science
- Sand Resources and Shoals:  
DNR Engineering & Construction, MGS
- Viewsheds: Town of Ocean City, Assateague Island NS
- Offshore Wind Development Community: MD's RFEOI



On the next several slides you will see this **red box**. This box represents the original draft RFI area that was under consideration in Spring 2010 for offshore wind.

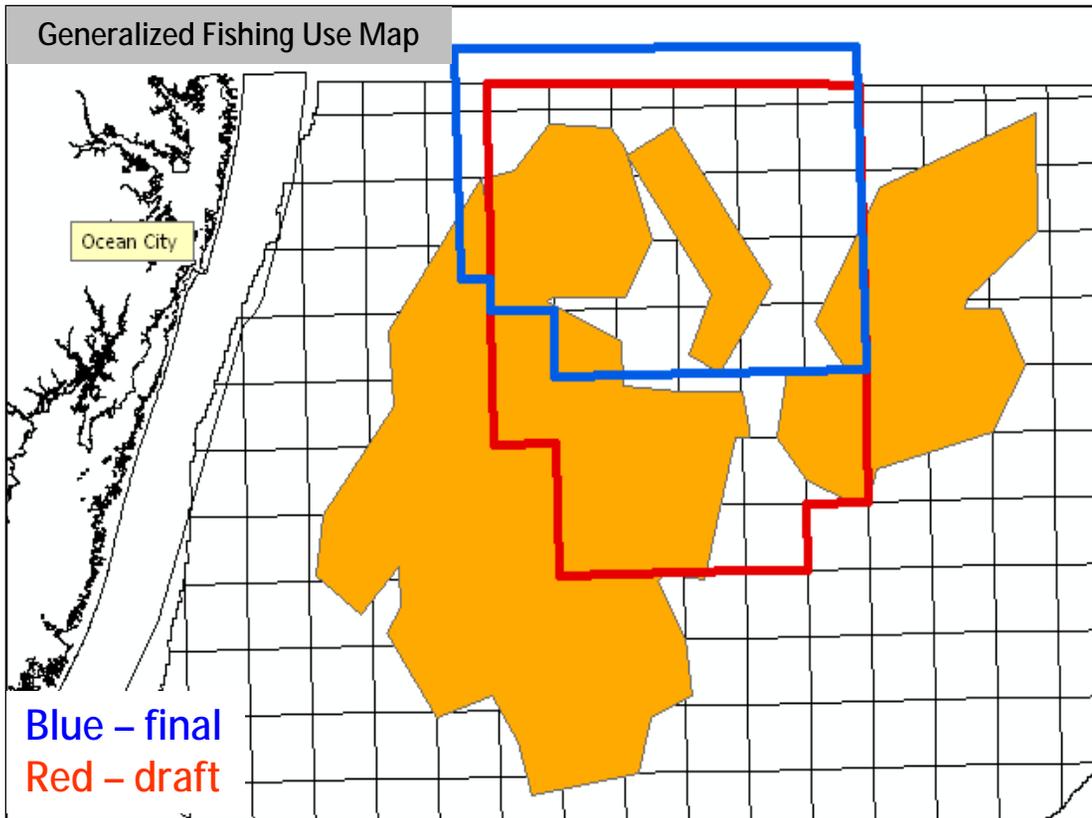
As a result of stakeholder outreach and Task Force recommendations, the final shape of this RFI area was changed.

The final RFI area will be shown later in the presentation.



Feedback Received  
Relationship of Maryland offshore wind energy Task Force draft RFI planning area with:

- Developer interest received during Maryland's RFEOI
- Town of Ocean City and Proposed Wilderness Area at Assateague Island NS viewshed concerns



### Feedback Received

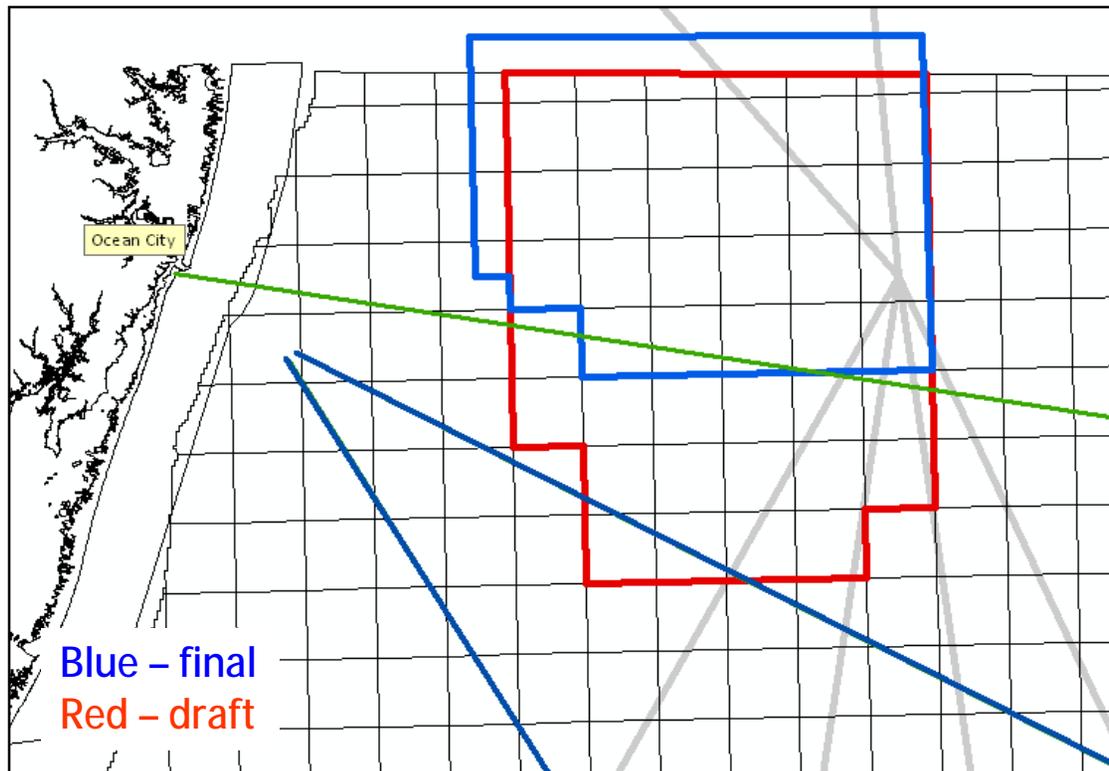
- There are a number of critically-important commercial-, recreational- or sport-fishing grounds that have been recorded in all or portions of the orange areas
  - In some of these areas, fishermen may haul 40–80% of their annual catch
- It was estimated that more than 85% of conflicts with commercial fishing activities could be avoided in areas north of, and including, row 6774 of the draft RFI area



### Feedback Received

- A number of benthic habitat types located off Maryland's Atlantic coast are sensitive to any type of bottom disturbance, including offshore energy development.

- Of specific importance are several documented communities of **slow-growing coldwater corals**
- Other **areas** may also have these corals and the entire area may have other unique benthic communities

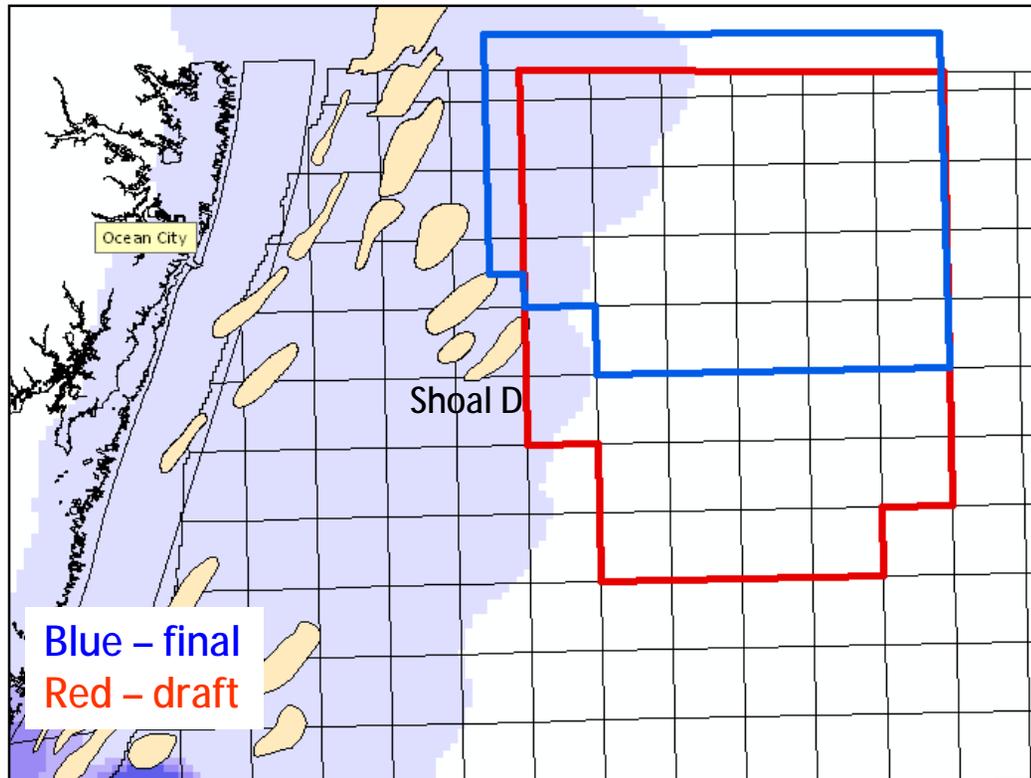


- Boating corridors in the south are used by various **fishing communities** to reach diverse fishing grounds.

### Feedback Received

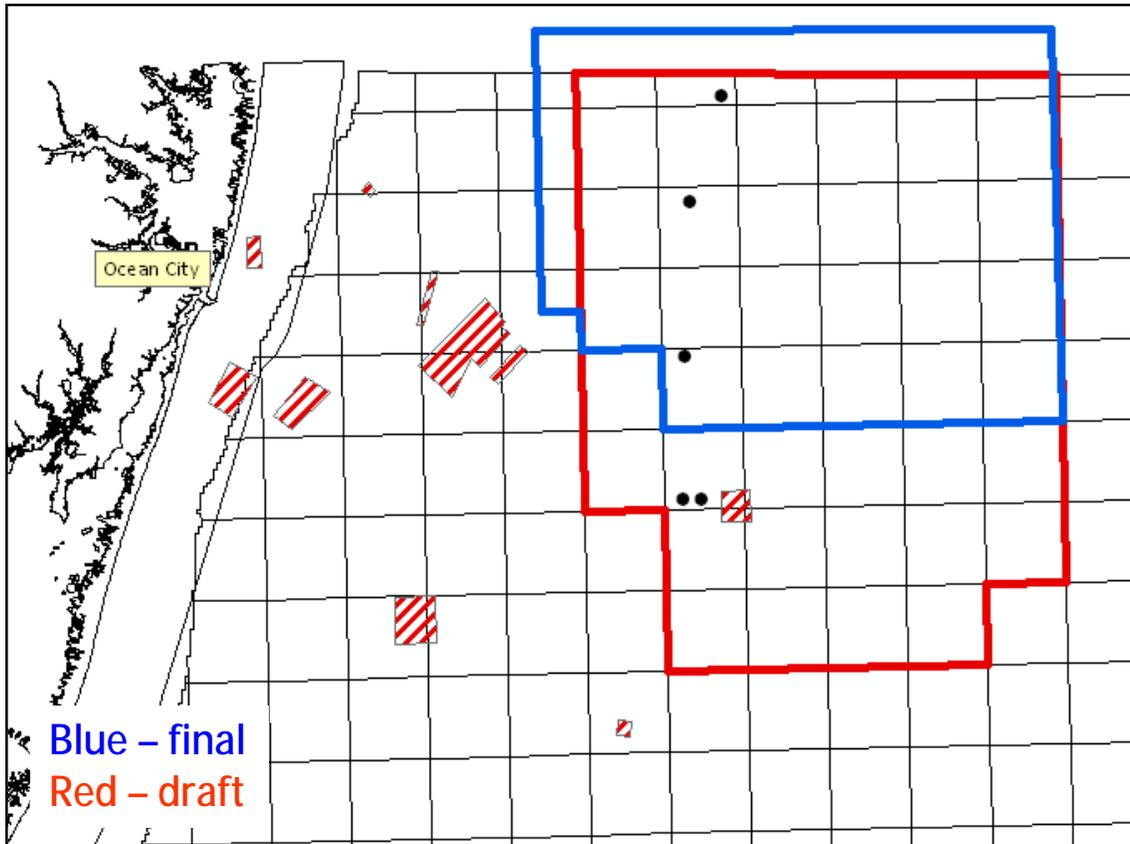
- A boating corridor traversed annually during the multi-million dollar White Marlin Open and other summer fishing **tournaments**. These tournaments are of great importance to the local economy and recreational- and sport-fishing communities.

## Offshore Birds and Shoals



### Feedback Received

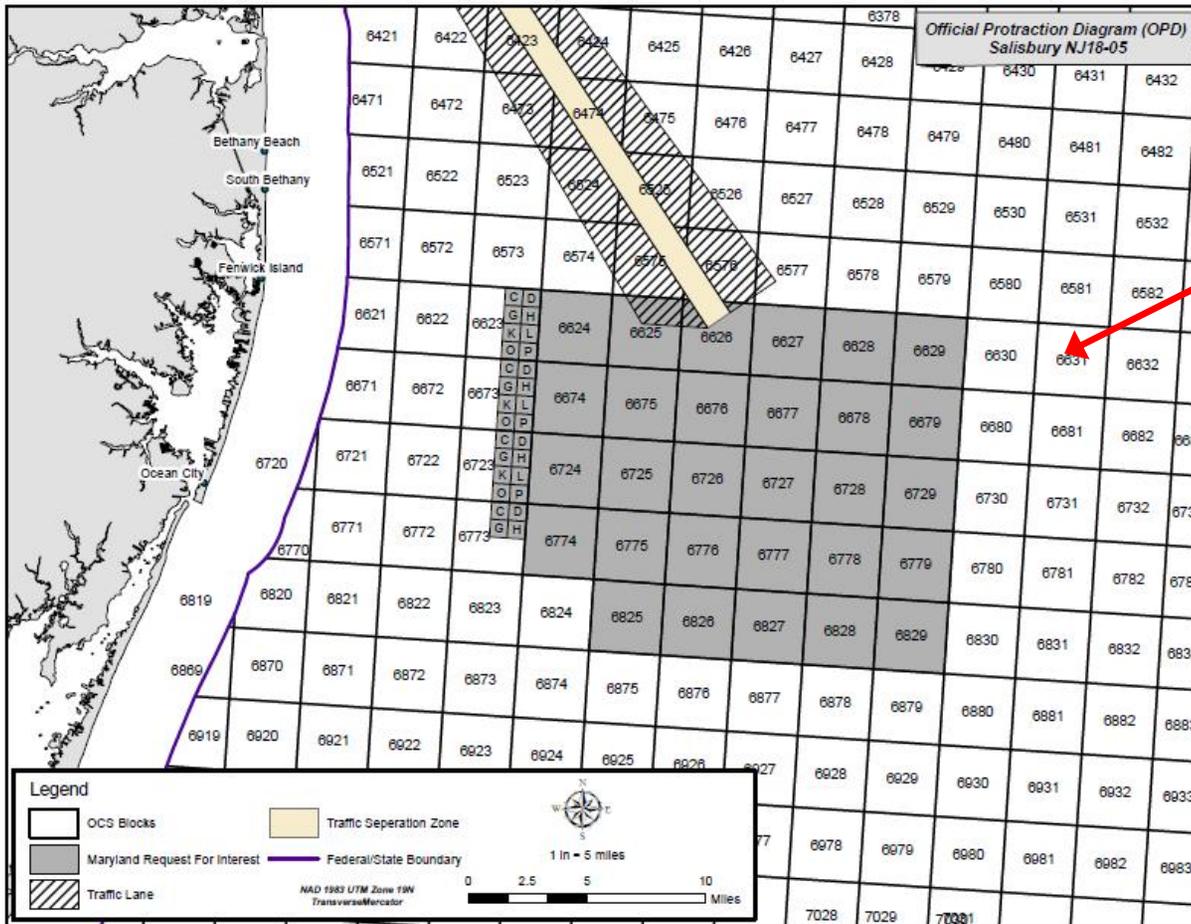
- Areas along the western boundary of the draft RFI planning area overlap with known offshore bird density areas
- Shoals B & D may concentrate bird feeding and migrating activities



### Feedback Received

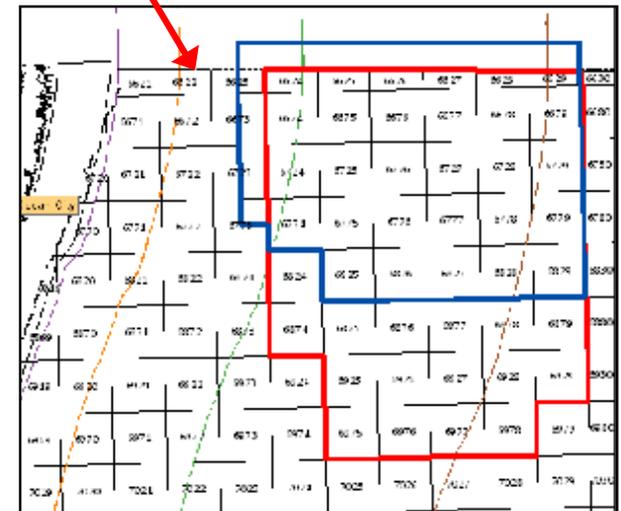
- The **Great Eastern Reef** is present in the SW region of the draft RFI area 
- Several documented shipwrecks are present in the draft RFI area - black dots .

# Final RFI Area



BOEMRE Released this final RFI area on November 9<sup>th</sup> in the Federal Register.

Here's how it compares to the original – **blue** is the final RFI area and **red** is the spring 2010 draft.





## Other Recommendations

- Recommended that best management, navigational safety and micro-siting practices be implemented in any final RFI area:
  - To limit impacts to unique benthic and natural coral communities
  - To ensure safe boating and fishing access to artificial and natural reefs, existing fishing grounds, and boating corridors
  - To limit impacts to known bird concentration areas as well as other ocean resources where known information gaps exist
- Requested support to address known research and data gaps:
  - Marine mammal and sea turtle migration pathways
  - Impacts of turbines on prey and fish communities
  - Noise and vibration impacts to living resources
  - Resource values of Shoal D
  - Detailed benthic and natural coral community surveys





## Next Steps

- U.S. Department of Interior published the RFI Area in the Federal Register, providing an opportunity for public comment.
- Continued outreach to encourage stakeholders and resource experts to weigh in during public comment period.
- Continue to work to expand functionality of Coastal Atlas, develop tools and add new data.
- Training opportunities to help users make the most of the data and tools found on the Coastal Atlas.
- We are interested in receiving comments on the Coastal Atlas as well as feedback on the data and tools needed to help users address specific coastal issues.

[http://dnr.maryland.gov/ccp/coastal\\_resources/oceancomments.asp](http://dnr.maryland.gov/ccp/coastal_resources/oceancomments.asp)



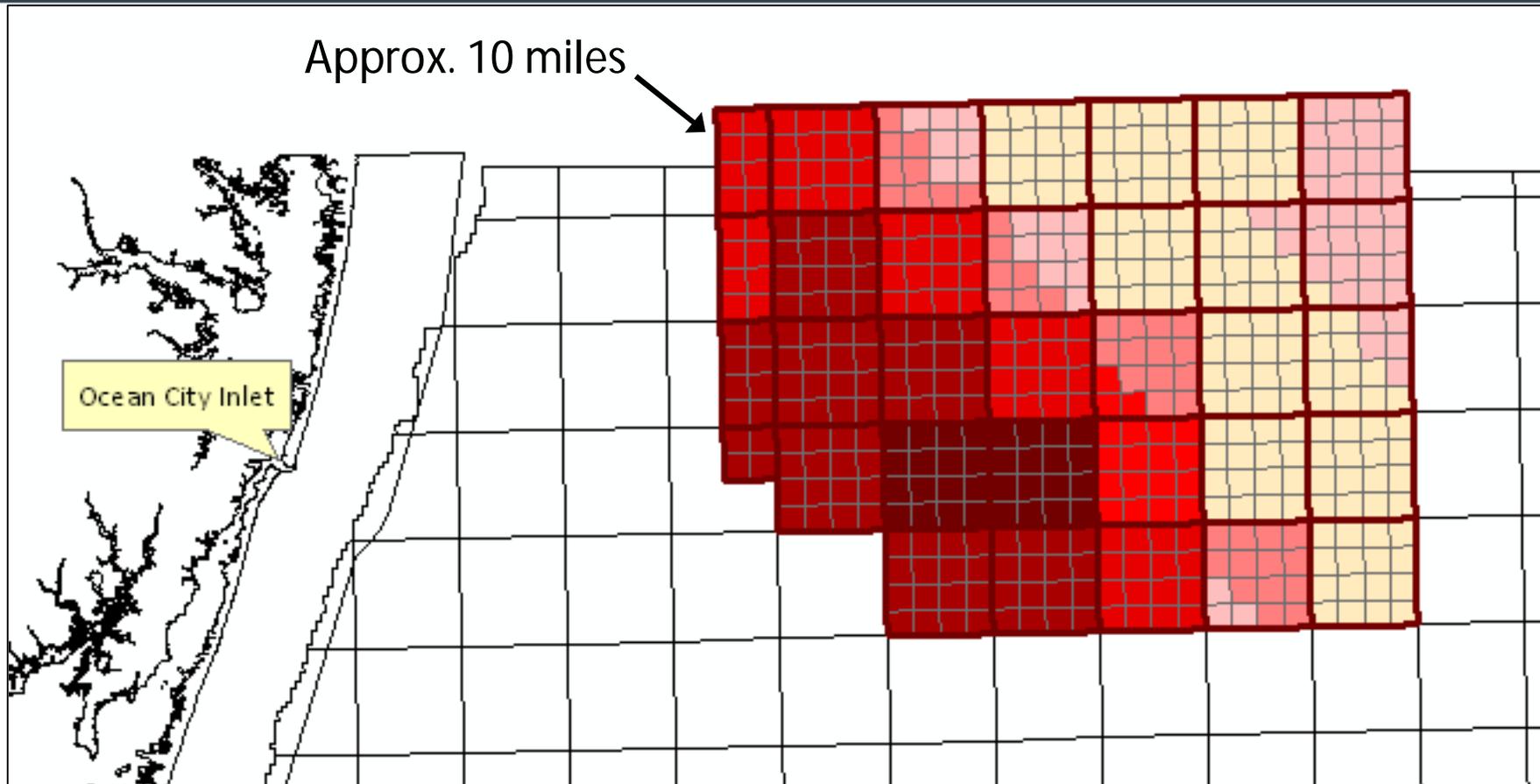


## RFI Comments

- The U.S. Department of Interior oversees the leasing process in federal waters. Via a Federal Register Notice, comments on the Maryland RFI area were accepted through January 10, 2011.
- Eight (8) developers responded indicating interest in potentially developing offshore wind energy projects in the Maryland RFI area.
- Other comments received about the RFI addressed regional shipping issues and some commercial fishing activities originating from Delaware



## Developer Interest



In response to the U.S. Department of Interior's Federal Register notice, developer interest was largely focused on the Western boundary of the RFI area.

The darker the red, the greater the number of companies responded indicating interest in a particular area.



## Opportunities for Public Comment

- U.S. Department of Interior oversees the leasing process in federal waters so they will seek public input via Federal Register Notices. Comments on the RFI area were accepted through January 10, 2011.
- There will be additional opportunities for input about the offshore wind energy leasing process in the coming months and years.
  - Request for Interest (RFI) – January 10, 2011
  - Leasing Process
  - Environmental Review
- *We encourage the public to be engaged as early as possible in the process.*





## Opportunities to Participate

- In 2011, there will be opportunities to participate in mapping efforts to identify human use and fishing areas between the Western boundary of the RFI area and shore
- In 2011, there will be opportunities to review Best Management Practices (BMPs) currently used within and around existing wind projects

Please contact the Chesapeake and Coastal Program if you would like to get involved, or visit:

[http://dnr.maryland.gov/ccp/coastal\\_resources/oceanplanning/](http://dnr.maryland.gov/ccp/coastal_resources/oceanplanning/)





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## For More Information



Watershed Services Unit  
Chesapeake & Coastal Program  
Department of Natural Resources  
[oceanplanning@dnr.state.md.us](mailto:oceanplanning@dnr.state.md.us)  
<http://dnr.maryland.gov/ccp>

