



Overview

Offshore wind development on the U.S. East Coast is projected to deliver [83 gigawatts of energy capacity by 2050](#). Millions of acres have been sited in U.S. federal waters for offshore wind projects, with [five major projects](#) now underway along the East Coast. As part of the siting process, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) prepares an [Environmental Impact Statement](#) to assess potential impacts on physical, biological, socioeconomic, and cultural resources. While many potential impacts are addressed through siting, remaining challenges can be minimized through proactive state action.

Policy Options

While BOEM and other federal agencies play the leading role in federal offshore wind projects, states have power in these processes — such as offshore cable approval and permitting of onshore infrastructure — to maximize coexistence with offshore wind projects.

- **Improved Port Infrastructure:** In 2025, [California \(AB-472\)](#) advanced legislation to require agencies to develop a plan and assess funding needs for improved waterfront facilities to accommodate offshore wind energy. Similarly, [New York](#) recently allocated \$300 million for the development of port infrastructure and the growing offshore wind energy industry.
- **Fisheries Compensation Funds:** States may reach agreements with wind developers to [facilitate compensation funding](#). Legislators in [Massachusetts \(S.668\)](#) have introduced legislation to establish a fisheries offshore wind mitigation fund, and [California](#) established a legislature-supported fund for loans in the fishing industry.
- **Mitigation and Monitoring:** The Atlantic's offshore wind projects publish Environmental Impact Statements that capture monitoring and mitigation efforts for marine species. In 2025, [Connecticut \(SB-63\)](#) also introduced legislation to require the state to disburse mitigation funds to address potential impacts to wildlife or fisheries, as well as support workforce development retraining for fishermen adversely impacted.

KEY POINTS

- Offshore wind leasing processes vary depending on whether the project is sited for state or federal waters. For state waters, there must be an established leasing process carried out in coordination with federal agencies. Projects sited in federal waters are led by BOEM, but states must approve plans for any activities that run through state waters. ([Stoel Rives, LLP](#))
- Environmental impact assessments are required, captured, and evaluated for each offshore wind project through the Final Environmental Impact Statements (FEIS). Scientific monitoring, in coordination with state and federal agencies, is conducted for the lifetime of the project to measure impacts on fisheries, invertebrates, marine mammals, or sea turtles. ([BOEM](#))
- To support the coexistence of wind projects and the fishing industry, offshore wind projects have designated Fishery Liaisons to manage additional fishery-specific issues in their region. ([BOEM](#))



Other Resources

- **NOAA Fisheries:** [Offshore Wind Energy: Assessing Impacts to Marine Life](#)
- **Stoel Rives, LLP:** [The Law of Wind: A Guide to Business and Legal Issues](#)

