



## **Interior Report, Salazar Highlight Potential and Benefits of Offshore Wind**

U.S. offshore areas, particularly off the East Coast, hold massive potential for wind energy development, given both the magnitude of the resource and its close proximity to load centers.

That is the conclusion of a recently released federal agency report as well as the message given in remarks by U.S. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar in a recent speech. “More than three-fourths of the nation’s electricity demand comes from coastal states, and the wind potential off the coasts of the lower 48 states actually exceeds our entire U.S. electricity demand,” Salazar said at a meeting of the organization 25X’25/America’s Energy Future, which advocates for the U.S. to get 25% of its energy from renewable sources by 2025.

Salazar said offshore wind development is particularly attractive because it has the advantage of being able to sidestep transmission siting issues that are often a part of onshore development. Offshore wind energy, he noted, could be delivered straight from sites in the Atlantic Ocean to load centers such as New York City and Boston. He said there is approximately 1 million MW of wind energy potential off of the East Coast along the outer continental shelf (OCS).

Salazar’s remarks largely echoed the results of a report released on the same day that was prepared at his directive by the Minerals Management Service in collaboration with the U.S. Geological Survey. “The energy resources of the OCS, and specifically renewable energy sources, are particularly attractive options with significant resources located in close proximity to coastal population centers,” concludes the report, which also covers offshore oil and gas development. “The experience, knowledge, and tools exist to ensure that offshore energy is developed in a comprehensive and environmentally sound manner.”

The Department of the Interior (DOI), which manages one-fifth of the nation’s land mass and 1.7 billion acres of ocean off U.S. coasts, will have a major role in creating the nation’s clean-energy future, said Salazar. DOI’s Bureau of Land Management has identified 20.6 million acres of public land with wind energy potential in the 11 western states.

This week DOI and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission signed an agreement that clarifies their respective agencies’ jurisdictional responsibilities for leasing and licensing renewable energy projects on the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf (see related story).

Also, in March Salazar issued a Secretarial Order that makes the production, development, and delivery of renewable energy one of the “highest priorities” for DOI. Salazar said the order’s purpose is to “send a loud and clear message that [DOI is] in the renewable energy business.”

*Source: Wind Energy Weekly, 10 April 2009*