United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT
WASHINGTON, DC 20240-0001

January 14, 2021

The Honorable Kathleen M. Rice
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Rice:

This is in response to your August 26, 2020, letter to Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt concerning renewable energy leasing activities offshore New York and New Jersey. I have been asked to respond on behalf of the Secretary.

The Administration is committed to promoting clean and safe development of the Nation's vast energy resources, including renewable sources, as stated in Executive Order 13783 of March 28, 2017, "Promoting Energy Independence and Economic Growth."

The U.S. offshore wind industry has experienced tremendous growth in the last few years, highlighted by increasing state interest to procure offshore wind energy along with decreasing prices worldwide for this energy source. The increased interest in offshore wind projects requires careful consideration and consultation with other agencies and stakeholders to minimize conflict within potential lease areas.

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) is examining current foreseeable offshore wind development along the Atlantic, and working with other federal agencies, such as the United States Coast Guard (USCG), the United States Department of Defense (DOD), and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), as well as the fishing industry, to inform a final Wind Energy Area (WEA) identification decision. BOEM's ongoing efforts to collect and analyze relevant data and information from these agencies are important in identifying a final WEA. Once a WEA is identified, BOEM will announce the decision and initiate an environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act and, if it is in the public interest, will publish notices announcing a future lease sale.

We value your engagement and look forward to your continued participation as our collaborative process proceeds. If you have any additional questions or comments, please contact James Bennett, Chief, Office of Renewable Energy Programs, at (703) 787-1660 or james.bennett@boem.gov. A similar response is being sent to the co-signers of your letter.

Sincerely,

Walter D. Cruickshank
Acting Director