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Locke Lord QuickStudy: What the Biden Administration Offshore Wind Proposal Could Mean for New York ?Offshore Wind ?

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On March 29, the Biden Administration issued a proposal to significantly boost U.S. investment in offshore wind energy. In addition to several funding mechanisms, the Administration proposed to designate a significant portion of the shallow water outside New York Harbor off the coasts of New York and New Jersey, called the “New York Bight”, as a priority Wind Energy Area. The next step is for BOEM to publish a Proposed Sale Notice for formal public comment followed by a lease process that the Administration estimates will take place in late 2021 or early 2022.

To facilitate this immense offshore wind build out, the BOEM will be required to develop a significant amount of information about the area, including resource assessments, environmental information, shipping traffic, potential fisheries impacts of the turbines and the connecting cables, among others. Fortunately, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (“NYSERDA”) has already performed an extensive study of wind development in the area. In 2016, NYSERDA began gathering data for what would become the Offshore Wind Master Plan (the “Plan”). The Plan, which received the Silver Achievement Award for Environmental Planning from the American Planning Association, includes twenty studies developing the information necessary to build out 2,400 megawatts (“MW”) of offshore wind capacity in the New York Bight. Key studies include (i) a preliminary offshore wind resource assessment; (ii) a study of cables, pipelines and other infrastructure; (iii) a marine mammals and sea turtles study; and (iv) a fish and fisheries study.

This information has already been used to support a 2020 New York State Solicitation for 2,490 MW of offshore wind capacity. Awarded to Empire Wind (1,260 MW) and Beacon Wind (1,230 MW), these solicitations included the development of the necessary infrastructure for offshore wind in the New York Bight, including port facilities at the South Brooklyn Marine Terminal, Point Jefferson Harbor and Montauk Harbor along with three interconnection locations on Long Island and two in New York City. The Empire Wind and Beacon Wind projects, sited in federal waters, will require the usual host of federal, state and local approvals. In addition, these projects will likely face industry opposition, as described in the QuickStudy discussing the Biden Administration OffShore Wind Proposal QuickStudy released earlier today. Assuming these projects move forward, they are expected to generate enough energy to power 1.3 million homes and support more than 5,200 jobs and \$8.9 billion of economic activity statewide through labor, supplies, development and manufacturing.

Locke Lord has been involved in the permitting and financing of some of the earliest offshore wind projects in the U.S. For further information regarding these issues, please contact the authors.?

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