

Power at the Shore

Trace how public officials balance authority, interests, and competing needs.

12.G5b "On various issues, certain governmental branches and agencies are responsible for determining policy. Those who create public policies attempt to balance regional and national needs, existing political positions and loyalties..."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline government actors. Circle regional and national concerns. Star sources of political influence.

Who Decides on Offshore Wind?

- ① Consider a hypothetical offshore wind project in federal waters, rather than the current status of any real proposal. The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), within the Interior Department, manages offshore renewable-energy leasing and reviews construction plans. NOAA Fisheries consults on protected species and fish habitat. The Army Corps of Engineers may review permits for work affecting navigable waters. Each agency acts under its own legal authority; political support alone cannot supply a missing permit.
- ② States influence energy policy and electricity planning. Depending on applicable law, local governments may oversee zoning or port improvements needed for construction. A port city might seek jobs and revenue, while fishing communities worry about access to fishing grounds. National concerns can include energy reliability, emissions, and ocean protection. Hearings and comments bring regional evidence into the record. These concerns may overlap or conflict; no government level automatically represents every interest within its area.
- ③ Congress makes laws and appropriates funds. Presidents direct executive priorities within legal limits. Elected officials also respond to party commitments and constituents. Fishing groups, unions, environmental organizations, and energy companies can offer expertise, organize supporters, or lobby. Their influence differs from an agency's formal decision authority. Courts may review legality when a proper challenge is brought. A defensible decision identifies the responsible actors, examines evidence, and explains tradeoffs within the law rather than treating popularity as permission to ignore it.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Name two federal agencies in the passage and state one responsibility of each.

2 Why can state and local governments influence an offshore wind project even though a federal agency manages offshore leasing?

3 Describe one conflict between a national need and a regional or local concern that officials may need to balance.

4 How can political loyalties or sources of political power affect the policy process? Use one example from the passage.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

For the hypothetical offshore wind case, write four sentences naming two government actors, a national concern and a regional concern, a source of political influence, and a way to weigh the interests within legal limits.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline government actors. Circle regional and national concerns. Star sources of political influence. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Name two federal agencies in the passage and state one responsibility of each.	Any two: BOEM handles leasing and plan review; NOAA Fisheries consults on species and habitat; the Army Corps reviews applicable water-work permits.
2	Why can state and local governments influence an offshore wind project even though a federal agency manages offshore leasing?	States influence energy policy and electricity planning. Local governments may oversee zoning or port improvements under applicable law.
3	Describe one conflict between a national need and a regional or local concern that officials may need to balance.	For example, national energy-reliability goals may conflict with regional fishing-access concerns. Accept other supported conflicts.
4	How can political loyalties or sources of political power affect the policy process? Use one example from the passage.	Party commitments and constituents influence elected officials. Groups can lobby, organize supporters, or provide expertise.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

BOEM would review the construction plan, while NOAA Fisheries would consult on species and habitat. Officials could weigh energy reliability against fishing-access concerns. Fishing groups and energy companies might organize support and provide evidence. Officials should compare alternatives and explain tradeoffs while meeting applicable legal requirements.

Accept supported actor roles and concerns from the reading. The response should distinguish political influence from formal authority and propose an evidence-based process within legal limits; either support or opposition to the hypothetical project may be defended.