

MA Fisheries Working Group on Offshore Wind

Virtual Meeting – June 23, 2023

MEETING SUMMARY

Updates from Massachusetts

Lisa Engler, Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (MA CZM), had several updates below:

- The Regional Fisheries Compensatory Mitigation Initiative, which began two years ago, involves eleven East Coast states: Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina. This initiative provides financial compensation for economic loss from offshore wind development off the Atlantic Coast. The RFP is currently in development and will be released this summer. For questions, please reach out to Lisa Engler or Pat Field (CBI). <https://offshorewindpower.org/fisheries-mitigation-project>
- Lisa shared that the Commonwealth submitted comments to BOEM on the Call Area for the Gulf of Maine region in June based on stakeholder feedback. The Massachusetts letters to BOEM on the Gulf of Maine can be found on CZM's website here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/czms-role-in-offshore-wind#gulf-of-maine-offshore-wind-planning->
- There will be in-person meetings for the fisheries community in late July and a virtual option available. The information will be shared with the group.

The following questions were asked by the working group:

- Q: How many turbines and what area are needed to meet electricity goals? There is a concern that there will be a substantive number and area of wind turbines. A: *The layout has not been settled and will depend largely on size and spacing of the floating turbines. BOEM currently has estimates, though there is a considerable range. We should keep asking these questions of BOEM and the developers.*
- Q: What are the impacts of the turbines on the hydrodynamics of the area? The turbines may have a significant impact on the gyres of George's Bank that are important for shellfish, groundfish, herring, and other fish and shellfish. A: *BOEM and the Academies of Science formed a group to discuss these kind of impacts. They are looking at this to see how these projects will affect currents. We will incorporate floating wind technology primers in a future Fisheries Working Group meeting. Materials from the May 10 & 11, 2023 GOM Task Force meeting are located here: <https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/state-activities/gulf-maine-task-force-meeting-may-10-11-2023>*

Fishing Industry Updates

- Angela Sanfilippo (Gloucester Fisherman's Wives Development Program): The GFWDP received a federal appropriation to study how to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from the industry. They are currently setting up an advisory board for the project.
- Lane Johnson (RODA): Lane attended the New Jersey Atlantic Shores Meeting. She noted that there was no public comment period for this project and hopes that MA continues to have a period for open comment. She is increasingly worried that BOEM is not allowing a period for comments.
- Beth Casoni (Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association (MLA)): She shares that the Waterfront App is up and live; they will push for the industry to use it effectively and streamline the process to get access to the developers. She notes that it will likely take time for people to get used to it and likely won't be used right away.
- Ron Smolowitz (Coonamesset Farms Foundation): Over the winter, scallop boats found small areas of clappers (scallops dead within the last 60 days). They were examined for disease, but they seemed to be healthy. They will have more information on this situation later this year after further tests. They note that noise levels can have impacts on the zooplankton and phytoplankton, which can impact scallops.

Unexploded Ordnance Detection & Management

Lisa Engler discussed the issue of the unexploded ordnance (UXO) detection and management with BOEM and Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) and its importance to the Fisheries Working Group. They were not available for this meeting, though they may be able to present in the future. Lisa shares that she would like to use this time to discuss topics and questions that can influence the presentation by BOEM and BSEE.

Elizabeth Marchetti reminded the working group that Empire Wind is 14 nautical miles south of Long Island, 17 nautical miles east of northern New Jersey, covering 80,000 acres, with water depths from 60 to 130 feet. Beacon is 20 nautical Miles south of the Vineyard and 17 Nautical miles southwest of Nantucket, covering 25 nautical miles and covering 25,000 acres. They have begun a study to identify and locate targets, noting that the purpose is purely information gathering. They will not relocate any targets. Elizabeth shared the various technologies and methodology used to identify targets. They have communicated with the New York lobstermen about the issue. *See presentation slides for more information.*

The group developed questions about UXO for BOEM and BSEE for future presentation:

- Will these coordinates be shared with NOAA and others to update current or future maps?
- Where will the cables go?

Boulders and Seafloor Disturbance Update

Lisa Engler shared that the Commonwealth has put together a framing document on Boulder and Bottom Disturbance sharing that there is a need to characterize the type of disturbance and estimate the magnitude of boulder and other seabed habitat altered in these activities; understand how changes may positively or negatively affect fish habitat; and understand how the resulting changed seabed may affect the fishing industry. There is also a need to understand existing and potential regulatory tools to address these effects earlier in reviewing projects and later post-approval and pre-construction, as well as best practices.

The Commonwealth intends to draft guidance on the following key topics: define boulder size; areas of potential effects associated with the movement of boulders; types of potential effects; potential minimization and mitigation measures.

Lisa posed several questions for the fishing industry that will aid in guidance development: Would the presence and size of boulders affect fishing access by limiting the kinds of fishing gear, vessel types, and sizes that could fish in that area? Would these activities affect sensitive habitat (short/long term) for spawning and other behaviors? Would bottom disturbance affect specific fished species? If so, how? How may boulder movement affect stock survey activities used for management purposes? Lisa encouraged members to share their insight with her.

- Q: Will the boulders that are moved be included in appropriate NOAA charts? A. *This is a very important point that we need to discuss further.*

New England Wind, Avangrid, Fisheries Baseline Assessment and Economic Analysis

Christina Hoffman, of Avangrid, shared updates on New England Wind, which includes offshore renewable wind energy facilities in Lease Area OCS-A 0534, along with associated offshore and onshore cabling and onshore substations. There are two phases with a total maximum of 130 wind turbine generator and electrical service platform positions in the Lease Area. Phase 1 includes Park City Wind and Phase 2 includes Commonwealth Wind. They shared the results of their assessment and economic exposure of commercial fisheries, for-hire recreational fisheries; their avoidance, minimization, and mitigation methods; and economic impact methodology. See presentation slides for more information.

- Q: Are the conch fisheries included in the data for estimating the impact of cables running to the shore? A: *It is included in the data we received from NMFS. Channeled whelk is the second most valuable species.*
- Q: What is the total number and area of cables running through Muskeget Sound? A: *There are seven total cables proposed through the area: two cables for Vineyard Wind, two cables for Park City Wind, 3 cables for Commonwealth Wind. SouthCoast Wind has proposed up to five additional cables for a project that would connect in Falmouth (although currently SouthCoast Wind is focused on connecting at Brayton Pt. in Somerset).*
- Q: Are the cable installations going to be coordinated across projects so that they are installed at similar times? A: *No, each project is on its own timeline and there is currently no effort to coordinate installation.*
- Q: How do we accurately assess the economic impact of larval recruitment, settlement and survival of this whole area, rather than individually? A: *We do not have an answer for this, but it's an important question to have answered.*
- Q: What is the future flexibility on revisiting the exposure analysis methodology and is the financial commitment you make based on this exposure analysis flexible and can it be revisited? A: *Avangrid is trying to capture some of this uncertainty by making conservative assumptions in the analysis that accommodates this uncertainty.*
- Q: What is the practical cut off to moving boulders to areas where there are other boulders? A: *It will depend on the vessel capacity to move a boulder. There are commitments on the New England Wind site that any boulder above 6.5 ft above sea floor would need to be moved. More information is needed on measurements to understand what can or cannot be moved.*
- Q: Whose responsibility is it to survey the cables to see if they are becoming exposed over the 30-year period in the Muskeget Sound? A: *It will likely be on a project-to-project basis, where the developer hires a contractor to run an inspection. After the cables are installed, the inspection will be carried out at six months, one year, two years, and every three years thereafter.*
- Q: What is your multiplier for associated fishing economic impact to businesses other than direct fishing revenue loss. A: *We did not use a multiplier in our calculations.*

Sunrise Wind, Orsted, Fisheries Baseline Assessment and Economic Analysis

Hauke Kite-Powell, of Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, gave a summary of Sunrise Wind Fisheries Exposure Analysis. Hauke discussed three types of effects related to wind farm development: effects during construction, displacement of fish, and effects during operations and decommissioning. They consider constrained access and constrained fishing within the lease area. Hauke discussed the results of calculations for commercial fishing effects. See slides for more information.

- Q: What will happen if some areas become unfishable and how will fishermen's insurance be addressed? A: *This is unclear, and it would be helpful to connect to the insurance companies to address this. So far, we have not been able to connect with the insurance industry.*
- Q: What is your multiplier for associated fishing economic impact to businesses other than direct fishing revenue loss. A: *We use a multiplier of 2.205 on landed value to capture the full economic impact, including upstream (e.g., processing) and downstream (e.g., fuel, ice) activity and induced effects associated with spending by fishing vessel crew etc.*

New Coastal App, App Developer

Khalid Kamhawi shared that his company, Ithaca, has built a free app called Waterfront App that provides information on offshore wind projects to fishermen and other marine stakeholders. The app provides real-time information directly from offshore wind developers, allowing fishermen to stay informed and engage with the project. Khalid shared snapshots of the app, different functions, and encouraged the working group to use it and share with others. See presentation slides for more information.

Construction Updates

Due to time constraints, Vineyard Wind and Southfork Wind were not able to share construction updates, but they will share with the working group via email.

Next Steps and Closing

Lisa Engler, MA CZM, closed the meeting and mentioned that the input received in written and verbal form is extremely helpful regarding this analysis to help the fishing industry.

Meeting adjourned at 12pm.