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Commercial Fisheries Commission
Meeting 1 | April 8, 2025 | 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM
100 Cambridge Street, Boston, MA | Conference Room B

Agenda

10:00 AM	Welcome & Introductions – <i>Co-chairs Dan McKiernan, DMF, and Alison Brizius, CZM</i>
10:30	Purpose & Intent of the Commission, and Initial Interview Findings – <i>Facilitator Pat Field, Consensus Building Institute</i>
11:00	Status of Related Efforts – <i>Various presenters</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• MA Oceans Advisory Commission• Resilient Coasts Initiative• MA Seafood Marketing Steering Committee• MA Seaport Economic Council• MA Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission• Designated Ports Area Review
12:00 PM	Lunch – <i>provided</i>
12:30	Identification of Topics for Deliberation by the Commission at a Future Meeting
1:30	Public Comment
1:45	Next Steps Actions from today's meeting, upcoming meetings
2:00	Adjourn



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MEMORANDUM

TO: Commercial Fisheries Commission (CFC)

FROM: Daniel J. McKiernan, Co-Chair, DMF Director
Allison Brizius, Co-Chair, CZM Director

DATE: April 1, 2025

SUBJECT: **Description and Operational Procedures for the Massachusetts
Commercial Fisheries Commission**

Statutory Mandate and Purpose

The Commercial Fisheries Commission (Commission) was established pursuant to [Section 79 of Chapter 179 of the Acts of 2022—An Act Driving Clean Energy and Offshore Wind](#). The Commission sunsets on August 11, 2030—8 years after the effective date of the legislation.

Section 79 provides that the Commission is to, “develop and recommend strategies, methods and tools to promote the sustainability of the commonwealth's commercial fishing industry including, but not limited to, harvesting, processing and production and sales and distribution.” As examples of subjects the Commission shall address to fulfill this purpose, Section 79 states that the Commission “shall address subjects **including** responsible development of offshore energy projects, mitigation and support strategies to ensure the long-term sustainability of fisheries in the Commonwealth...” (emphasis added). By using the word “including,” Section 79 contemplates that the Commission

will address particular subjects in addition to “the responsible development of offshore energy projects . . .” Accordingly, in keeping with its overarching purpose, the Commission may address issues that concern the commercial fishing industry but that do not necessarily involve offshore energy projects. Given this, the Commission must be cognizant of where its potential scope of work could overlap with existing authorities and avoid redundancies and inconsistencies.

Composition of the Commission

Section 79 specifies 19 members of the Commission: Directors of the Commonwealth’s Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) and Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM), as co-chairs; Secretary of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) or their designee; and 16 members appointed by the Governor representing specified organizations.¹

As constituted, the Commission has 17 members (contact information is at the end of this document):

- Co-Chair Daniel J. McKiernan, DMF Director
- Co-Chair Alison Brizius, CZM Director
- Rebecca Tepper (or designee), EOEEA Secretary
- Kevin Stokesbury, School for Marine Science and Technology at UMass Dartmouth
- Roger Berkowitz, Massachusetts Seafood Collaborative
- Edward Barrett, Massachusetts Fishing Partnership
- Tim Brady, Stellwagen Bank Charter Boat Association
- Katie Almeida, Responsible Offshore Development Alliance
- Eric Hansen, Fisheries Survival Fund
- Jackie Odell, Northeast Seafood Coalition
- Angela Sanfillipo, Gloucester Fishermen’s Wives Association
- Beth Casoni, Massachusetts Lobstermen’s Association
- Vito Giacalone, Gloucester Fishing Community Preservation Fund
- Aubrey Church, Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen’s Alliance
- Pamela LaFreniere, Center for Sustainable Fisheries
- Al Cottone, Gloucester Fisheries Commission
- Gordon Carr, New Bedford Harbor Development Commission.

The Commission cannot create new seats though DMF/CZM can fill vacant seats within the organizations designated in the legislation. However, the Commission may invite speakers, allow for observers, and engage with others outside the membership. Any official acts of the Commission (letters, recommendations, reports) will be under the sole purview of only official Commission members.

Meeting Administration, Conduct, and Participation

¹ One of the listed organizations is the Offshore Mariners Wives Association, which is defunct and, therefore, does not have any representative on the Commission. Another listed organization, the New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center, opted not to participate on the Commission. Accordingly, the Commission has 17 members.

The Commission is a public body subject to the Commonwealth's Open Meeting Law MLG c. 30A, §§ 18-25. Accordingly, meeting notices must be published, meeting minutes must be taken, approved, published, and meetings must be open to the public unless the body enters into executive session. Additionally, a quorum (9 or more members) of this public body may not deliberate on any issues within its jurisdiction outside of a Commission meeting. This includes meetings among a quorum of Commission members, as well as serial communications (e.g., e-mails, text messages, phone calls among members).

DMF staff will manage all aspects of compliance with the Open Meeting Law. DMF will provide you with a summary of the Open Meeting Law and an acknowledgement of receipt form, which you must complete and return to Bradlie Morgan (bradlie.morgan@mass.gov) at DMF prior to our first meeting.

The Commission must meet not fewer than four times per calendar year. Accordingly, meetings will be scheduled quarterly and will be held in-person or virtually via Zoom, as decided by the co-chairs.² Meeting lengths may vary based on the meeting agenda, but you should expect routine meeting times will be between three and four hours.

Appointed members are expected to actively participate in and attend all meetings. For any seat appointed by the Governor, the use of proxies or designees is not authorized. An appointed member may have an associate from their organization attend meetings, but this associate will be considered a member of the public and not a member of the Commission. Should an appointed member miss three or more meetings in a given calendar year, the co-chairs may ask they resign their seat, and their organization will have an opportunity to nominate another representative for appointment by the Governor. However, this alternative nominee will not be able to serve on the Commission until they are appointed by the Governor.

Meeting agendas will be drafted and finalized by the co-chairs. At the end of each Commission meeting, members will be asked for future meeting agenda items. Members are also welcome to submit proposed agenda items for consideration by the co-chairs. For such a submission to be considered for the next scheduled meeting, it must be submitted to the co-chairs at least two weeks prior to the next scheduled meeting date. In most instances, issues brought to the attention of the co-chairs within two weeks of a scheduled meeting will not be addressed until the following meeting. However, exceptions will be made if necessary to address emerging and urgent issues that could not have otherwise been reasonably anticipated. As the Commission details its work, the Commission will develop an annual work plan which can be adaptive as issues rise and fall throughout the year.

Meeting agendas will be designed to facilitate the work products of the public body. The co-chairs will be responsible for inviting outside persons to present if relevant issues are beyond the immediate expertise of Commission members. Meetings will not be

² There may be changes in meeting format, due to pending legislation regarding the Open Meeting Law, but at present, the co-chairs do not intend to hold hybrid meetings.

conducted under formal rules of order or parliamentary procedure (e.g., “Robert’s rules”). Instead, the co-chairs will guide discussions and debate. Accordingly, the Commission will not take formal positions by majority vote, but rather through group consensus seeking concurrence of all or most members, as necessary.

At the discretion of the co-chairs, working groups may be developed to address discrete issues and facilitate work products on these issues for the consideration and review of the Commission at large. Such work groups will consist of eight or fewer members of the Commission with relevant expertise on the subject matter.

As stated above, there are other established entities that address issues germane to commercial fisheries and offshore energy development. In fact, many members of this Commission (and the organizations they represent) currently serve on or participate in these other entities. To prevent redundancies and avoid conflicts between this Commission and these entities, the co-chairs will discourage this public body from deliberating on matters that are before—and within the domain of—those entities. These entities include, among others, the New England Fishery Management Council; the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council; the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission; the Massachusetts Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission; the Massachusetts Shellfish Advisory Panel; the Massachusetts Seafood Marketing Steering Committee; the Massachusetts Fisheries and Habitat Working Groups on Offshore Wind Energy; and the Massachusetts Port and Harbor Planning Program.

Annual report

Section 79 requires the Commission to produce an annual report to be published electronically by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) and filed with the clerks of the state Senate and House of Representatives.

Support for Public Body Work by Government Entities

Given the robust mission of this group and the mandate to produce an annual report, extensive support from government entities may be necessary. Section 79 acknowledges this by requiring EEA to provide administrative support. Such support may also include staff support from other EEA agencies and contracted services. Additionally, DMF will make several members of its Policy and Management Program available to the Commission. This includes Bob Glenn; Story Reed; Jared Silva; Melanie Griffin; Brad Schondelmeier; and Bradlie Morgan. DMF will also seek, but cannot direct, other state agencies or departments to assist, if and when desired by the Commission.

Conflict of Interest Law and State Ethics Training

As a public body member, you are considered a special state employee. As such, you are subject to the state’s Conflict of Interest Law and ethics training requirements. This requires that you annually submit an acknowledgement of receipt of the summary of the conflict laws and every other year complete online ethics training available through the state’s ethics commissions. DMF support staff will provide you with the initial forms to

complete and annual reminders. For 2025, both the acknowledgement of receipt and ethics training should be completed prior to the first meeting of this public body. Please send the acknowledgement of receipt to Bradlie Morgan (bradlie.morgan@mass.gov) at DMF. The state ethics commission will provide you with certificate of completions, which you should save for your records.

Reimbursement for Expenses

Travel expenses to attend in-person meetings of this Commission are reimbursable consistent with state travel reimbursement guidelines. Additionally, other travel expenditures germane to your participation on this public body may be reimbursable. To be reimbursed, such activities must be pre-approved by the Commonwealth and be consistent with state travel reimbursement guidelines. At the start of each fiscal year, public body members will be provided state reimbursement forms. Forms should be submitted quarterly to Bradlie Morgan (bradlie.morgan@mass.gov) at DMF. The reimbursement form for the current fiscal year will be provided to you electronically in advance of the Commission's first meeting. Please complete these reimbursement forms in their electronic format.

Massachusetts Commercial Fishing Commission

Findings from
Initial Interviews with Commissioners
February 2025

Commission Purpose

The Commission was established in statute in 2022 in Section 79 of Chapter 179 and the act was titled, “An Act Driving Clean Energy and Offshore Wind.” Commission’s purpose is described as follows:

- Develop and recommend strategies, methods and tools to promote the **sustainability of the commonwealth's commercial fishing industry** including, but not limited to, harvesting, processing and production and sales and distribution.
- Address the **responsible development of offshore energy projects' impacts on fisheries**.

Commission Value

- **Exclusive MA CF industry membership** gives a focus on and weight to the industry, something missing from existing groups.
- **Cross-issue thinking:** The Commission is the only forum for the MA CF industry to connect work and issues across existing commissions, panels, and groups, from offshore wind to seafood marketing to fisheries regulation.
- **Sphere of influence:** The Commission is the only forum available for the MA CF industry to directly influence the Governor and Legislature.
- **Visionary and forward looking:** The Commission is the only forum for the MA CF industry to take a step back and think collectively, strategically, and proactively, rather than being reactive in response to the issue or crises of the moment. **This is an opportunity to be visionary about the future of the MA CF industry.**

Sphere of Influence

- This Commission is an opportunity for the MA CF industry to be a resource to, give recommendations to, and receive response from:
 - the Governor as chief executive overseeing agencies that can aid or abet the success of the commercial fishing industry in the Commonwealth.
 - the Legislature as creator of the Commission and the source of funds to invest in fishing's future.
- This Commission can give advice and recommendations to state agencies and act as a resource and connection for agencies to members of the industry.
- Products could include:
 - Annual report
 - Letters to Governor, Legislature, state agencies
 - Policy white papers
 - Economic development plan
 - Strategic plan for the industry

Principles

- **Influence:** have impact and influence, not just talk about issues.
- **Awareness, Coordination & Efficiency:** be aware of related efforts from other state and regional entities in order to be a hub of all things commercial fishing. Avoid duplication, and consider synergies and connections.
- **Transparency:** in the relationship between state government and Commission.
- **Vision:** focus on the future and a vision for the Massachusetts seafood industry that is robust, diversified, innovative, and sustainable.

Relation to other Groups

The Commission should pick up specific, CF industry-related, cross-cutting issues raised in the groups below, and discuss, fine-tune, and drive home specific recommendations or actions. The project details, and month-to-month issues should be left to the groups.

- Massachusetts Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission (MFAC)
- MA Oceans Advisory Commission
- Ocean Science Advisory Council
- MA Fisheries and Habitat Working Groups on OSW
- MA Resilient Coasts Initiative
- Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASFMC) Habitat Program's
- New England Fisheries Management Council's (NEFMC) Essential Fish Habitat (EFH).
- MA Seafood Marketing Steering Committee
- MA Seaport Economic Council
- Various advisory bodies to Orsted and Vineyard Wind resilience or innovation funds

Commission Role and Relation to Other Groups

- **The Commission should:** synthesize feedback from existing bodies, prioritize issues, and develop clear action plans.
- **The Commission should:** act as liaisons to their constituents, add capacity to DMF and help answer questions.
- **The Commission should:** create the framework for administration of the **various OSW compensation funds** managed by DMF, within the terms of the contracts established. The actual disbursement of funds should be designated to the smaller advisory bodies per each project agreement.

Commission Role and Relation to Other Groups (Cont)

- **The Commission should not:** typically engage in specific fisheries management issues handled best by the MA Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission, ASFMC, and the NEFMC
- **The Commission should not:** focus on project specific issues with any marine development, be that OSW, sand mining, or otherwise. The Commission may weigh in on cross-cutting issues in fisheries management as it pertains to commercial fishing sustainability.

Potential Topics (pt 1)

- **Economic development, i.e., making industry stronger, reducing risk for the industry**, e.g., the Commonwealth purchasing a set percentage of each catch, economic diversification and value-add products, cutting costs through new technologies, fuel subsidies, increasing seafood market.
- **Working waterfront infrastructure and port investment** to not only sustain but grow the MA seafood industry
- **Shoreside processing needs** and improvements, e.g., funds available for cold storage, financing program for seafood processing
- **Local seafood marketing**, as opposed to business-specific marketing
- **Local, secure, sustainable seafood** such as building out more local markets (Farm to Institution NE, Farm to School, etc.)
- **Economic effects** of specific fisheries management decisions

Potential Topics (pt 2)

- **Offshore Wind**

- Policy and issues larger than specific projects, e.g., boulder relocation
- Identifying lessons learned from planning and permitting to-date
- Developing framework for the DMF-managed funds for innovation and resiliency
- Best practices for mitigating impacts, e.g., avoiding habitat
- Improved communication when OSW array goes awry, e.g., blade failure
- Transmission and procurements
- Harvesting guidelines or best practices in arrays

Potential Topics (pt 3)

- **Ensuring state plans, activities, and policies support and enhance fisheries and fishing** (e.g., Biodiversity Plan, DPA Assessment, Resilience Plans, Oceans Plan)
- The **aging of the fleet** in terms of equipment, port infrastructure, and fishermen, e.g., training programs for new entrants
- **Fisheries-by-fisheries discussions**, e.g., seeding scallops, yellowtail processing
- **Identifying recurring benefits** to provide for existing fleets
- Exploring ways for small businesses to **support converting state or federal fishing gear** to be compliant with new regulations

Potential Topics (pt 4)

- **Streamlining permitting processes** that affect fishermen (port improvements; processing, selling, transporting seafood, etc)
- **Promoting innovations in and sustainable fishing gear and technology**, e.g., real-time data monitoring technology (temperature sensors, etc), Climate Friendly Fisheries, fuel efficiency, technology innovation for coexistence
- **Improving the science of fisheries management, and encouraging collaborative research**, e.g., processes for vessels to collect oceanographic data, EBFM
- **Adaptive management, especially in the face of climate change** – allow regulations to evolve as new information about fish stocks, environmental conditions, fishery dynamics become available

Additional Perspectives

- **Decision Makers**
 - Key Senate and House staffers
 - Governor's staff
 - Lt. Governor
- **Opportunities to bring in additional perspectives:**
 - Ex-officio members
 - Focus groups on specific topics
- **Potential perspectives to include:**
 - Other agencies (MDAR and food systems, MassDevelopment, etc.)
 - “Next generation” of fishermen
 - Aquaculture
 - New Bedford Ocean Cluster
 - Sustainable Scallop Fund
 - Banks

Logistics

- Meet four times a year with a mixture of in-person and virtual formats.
- Convene work groups to advance specific issues between meetings.
- Ensure financial support to undergird and ensure the Commission's effectiveness

Commission Meeting #1 (in -person):

- Introductions
- Purpose and Intent of the Commission and Interview Findings
- Status of related efforts (other commissions, etc.)
- Identification of 1 to 3 immediate topics for small group work in advance of the next quarterly meeting
- Discuss resources to support the Commission in FY25

Commission Meeting #2:

- Commission charter: decision-making, role of co-chairs, etc.
- Discuss and agree on recommendations of the 1 to 3 immediate topics for small group work from prior meeting
- Work plan discussion: select key topics to work on for the first year

Findings Recap

- The Commission's purpose is clear and two-fold as created by the Legislature
- The Commission can and will add value
- The Commission must focus on action
- The Commission should report to the Governor and the Legislature
- The Commission must liaise with gubernatorial staff (Lt Gov?) and legislative staff
- The Commission can be a resource for DMF and CZM and alleviate rather than add to capacity concerns.
- The Commission must be convened ASAP

SECTION 79. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, there shall be a commercial fisheries commission to develop and recommend strategies, methods and tools to promote the sustainability of the commonwealth's commercial fishing industry including, but not limited to, harvesting, processing and production and sales and distribution. The commission shall address subjects including the responsible development of offshore energy projects, mitigation and support strategies to ensure the long-term sustainability of fisheries in the commonwealth, the creation of a comprehensive infrastructure to enable effective dialogue between fishing industry stakeholders and those involved in the development of marine-based energy generation and transmission projects including, but not limited to, the offshore generation and transmission.

The commission shall consist of: the director of marine fisheries and the director of coastal zone management, who shall serve as co-chairs; the secretary of energy and environmental affairs or the secretary's designee; and 16 members appointed by the governor, 1 of whom shall be from the Massachusetts Seafood Collaborative from a list of 3 nominees submitted by its board of directors, 1 of whom shall be from the Massachusetts Fishing Partnership from a list of 3 nominees submitted by its board of directors, 1 of whom shall be from the Stellwagen Bank Charter Boat Association from a list of 3 nominees submitted by its board of directors, 1 of whom shall be from the Responsible Offshore Development Alliance from a list of 3 nominees submitted by its board of directors, 1 of whom shall be from the Fisheries Survival Fund from a list of 3 nominees submitted by its board of directors, 1 of whom shall be from the Northeast Seafood Coalition from a list of 3 nominees submitted by its board of directors, 1 of whom shall be from the Gloucester Fishermen's Wives from a list of 3 nominees submitted by its board of directors, 1 of whom shall be from the Offshore Mariners Wives Association from a list of 3 nominees submitted by its board of directors, 1 of whom shall be from the Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association from a list of 3 nominees submitted by its board of directors, 1 of whom shall be from the Gloucester Fishing Community Preservation Fund from a list of 3 nominees submitted by its board of directors, 1 of whom shall be from the New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center from a list of 3 nominees submitted by its board of directors, 1 of whom shall be from the Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance from a list of 3 nominees submitted by its board of directors, 1 of whom shall be from the Center for Sustainable Fisheries, Inc from a list of 3 nominees submitted by its board of directors, 1 of whom shall be from the Gloucester Fisheries Commission from a list of 3 nominees submitted by its board of directors, 1 of whom shall be from the School for Marine Science and Technology at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth and 1 of whom shall be from the Harbor Development Commission doing business as the New Bedford Port Authority from a list of 3 nominees submitted by the commissioners.

The commission shall meet not less than 4 times each year and shall produce a report annually that shall be published electronically by the executive office of energy and environmental affairs. The executive office shall provide administrative support for the

operations of the commission and file its report with the clerks of the senate and house of representatives. This section shall expire 8 years after the effective date of this act.