MA Fisheries Working Group on Offshore Wind

March 31, 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

MEETING SUMMARY

Lisa Engler opened the meeting. After review of the agenda, Undersecretary Secretary Dan Sieger made opening remarks emphasizing the importance of collaboration and transparency within the group which was instrumental in guiding the refining of the initial offshore wind lease areas identified by BOEM. He looks forward to working together as offshore wind is a Federal and State priority.

Proposed Fisheries Working Group Terms of Reference

Lisa Engler presented proposed draft Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Fisheries Working Group. The TOR outline the purpose of the FWG, membership, roles and responsibilities of the members as well as the format of the meetings. Since the Fisheries Working Group was originally convened in 2012 for the purpose of advising the siting of the offshore wind area south of Massachusetts, the purpose and composition of the group has changed. The TOR seeks to provide a more current framework for the group to address the development of offshore wind projects as opposed to the siting of BOEM's wind energy areas. Membership seeks to represent a cross section of the fishing industry including commercial and recreational fishing and by gear type. The draft TOR will be provided to the group for feedback. Input will be received on the TOR.

In response to questions, Lisa explained that the original membership, posted on the website, is a strawman membership. Membership will represent the diversity of fishing sectors and gear types in Massachusetts as well as OSW developers and state and federal agencies.

Offshore Wind Developer Updates:

Vineyard Wind (Crista Bank, Fisheries Liaison)

Crista Bank provided an update of the status of the Vineyard Wind 1 (VW1) project (see presentation). The FEIS for the 800 MW project has been released, the State permitting is complete, and the team is nearing the end of the process, currently waiting on the Record of Decision. The development will consist of 13 MW turbines. The number of turbines has been reduced to 62 towers, resulting in a smaller project footprint. Construction will take place in New Bedford with operation and maintenance activities primarily out of Martha's Vineyard. Cables will make landfall in Barnstable.

Park City Wind (CT) will be south of VW1 and will use a similar cable corridor through Muskegat Channel. Construction will be out of Bridgeport, CT. The permitting process has just started.

SMAST has completed two years of fisheries trawl surveys in the project lease area and survey control area. Ventless trap surveys (Black Sea Bass) and HMS surveys (with NEAq) were also completed. Review of the fisheries survey is ongoing, and a public meeting will be held this spring. Surveys will continue in 2021 (3rd year). Aerial surveys for bird species in lease area 522 are conducted monthly or bimonthly during the migratory season.

Vineyard Wind has created a communication and outreach process for the fishing industry including website resources (vessel request for information; mariner updates; fisheries science).

Equinor (Scott Lundin)

Scott Lundin presented an update on the latest work conducted by Equinor (see presentation). Beacon Wind 1 is in the MA lease areas, and Equinor is also planning a project (Empire Wind) off NY/NJ in the NY lease areas. Looking for a cable route proved challenging given the extraordinary amount of existing submarine cables in NY Bight. Initial proposed route was sited further west in response to fishermens' input. Equinor has prepared a process to handle any gear damage claims that may be filed by fishermen. An HMS study with NEAq (Jeff Kneebone) on acoustic telemetry and recreational fishery monitoring has been initiated in 2020 and will continue to be expanded into 2022.

Following the presentation, Mike Pierdinock provided more background on the HMS study (Kneebone). In response to questions, Scott explained that instead of moving buoy lines during survey activities, they work around them; they are hoping to be done before more gear goes into the water. Elizabeth Marchetti, lead fishery liaison officer for Beacon Wind, added that gear locations are shared with survey vessels. In regard to environmental studies, Scott explained that they are conducting geophysical studies, then doing benthic habitat studies with grabs; fish surveys are not planned yet; habitat mapping is the focus.

Mayflower (Joel Southhall, Fisheries Liaison Officer)

Joel Southhall presented an update on Mayflower Wind's project (see presentation). The Mayflower project will be located in lease area 521. Project could potentially provide 1600 MW and is planned to make landfall in Falmouth, MA. Mayflower Wind has committed to investments into MassCEC programs and Cape Light Compact over the next 10 - 25 years. The project reached several milestones in 2020 including progress on G&G surveys as well as geoarchaeology in the lease area. 2021 fishery surveys began in mid/late April. Monitoring will support HMS work by Jeff Kneebone; as well as recreational fishing effort; lobster larvae, ventless trap, and trawl camera surveys with SMAST. Metocean data is shared realtime online from offshore buoy (http://p5.neracoos.org/products/gmap/large_map.html). G&G on the cable routes will start soon.

Barbara Stone (New Bedford Port Authority) explained that BOEM and Atkins plan to conduct a floating wind demo project in the Mayflower lease area. This has been evolving over the year; there are no concrete plans yet and it is still in discussion phases.

Mike Pierdinock observed that there is a significant amount of fishing tournaments for HMS out of Montauk that may be in wind energy areas. He suggested that it could be useful to get some data on whether the fish tournaments occur in the WEAs.

Ørsted (Ed LeBlanc and Melanie Gearon)

Ed LeBlanc provided a brief update on Ørsted's three projects in the RI wind energy area: Sunrise Wind (880 MW, western Long Island Beach by Fire Island; about 84 towers in 1x1 NM grid); Bay State Wind (no project yet); and Revolution Wind (704 MW split between RI and CT; with a 2023 construction target). The Revolution Wind cable is expected to land in Quonset, RI. An NOI is expected in about a month to initiate the NEPA process (see presentation).

Ed described the full-scale simulator housed at the U.S. Maritime Resource Center in Middletown, RI. It provides multiple scenarios of weather conditions. Several groups of fishermen visited it and agreed that it is as close as you can get to the real thing and shows how things can change quickly creating different conditions out on the ocean. Ørsted aims to use this conceptual framework to have a Navigational Enhancement and Training Program to 1) improve navigation equipment through upgrade to radars or AIS; and 2) provide training opportunities through vouchers or grants. In addition to simulator, Orsted offers access to a captain's course, license upgrade and rules of the road refresher. Ørsted signed MOA to share information with NOAA to improve weather forecasting in marine environments to improve weather prediction and fish management.

Attendees who had tried the simulator stated that it will likely be impossible to navigate safely through the towers array at nighttime or in adverse conditions. It will likely require two people in the wheelhouse to navigate. While it is possible to improve equipment such as radar and AIS, he noted when going in diagonal direction the corridor is actually 0.7 NM, not 1 NM.

Mike Pierdinock added that many recreational fishing boats are not equipped with either an AIS nor radar and expressed hope that compensation for equipment will also be extended to the recreational fishing and for-hire community. Beth Casoni who also tried out the simulator echoed the fishermen's concerns and encouraged state officials to visit and try out the simulator to understand the daunting conditions under zero visibility. She indicated that the Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association is planning to organize a group to visit.

Orsted South Fork Wind (Melanie Gearon)

Melanie Gearon provided an update on the South Fork Wind Project. The project review is proceeding and the DEIS was issued in January 2021; the FEIS is expected in August 2021 and includes several modifications for fishermen. As a result the layout of the towers has

evolved to include the 1x1 NM spacing. Ed LeBlanc described the updated aids to navigation including AIS on every tower, markers with retroreflectors that are larger than international standards. He added that some fishing fleets will be engaged to support the wind industry's need for scout vessels etc. (see presentation).

South Fork Wind Economic Impact Assessment (Hauke Kite-Powell and Di Jin)

Hauke Kite-Powell and Di Jin described the methodology and results of the economic impact analysis of the South Fork Wind project. They described in detail how the data were used and analyzed to apply to the study area. In some cases data were adjusted based on expert input by fishermen. Overall, they found no significant economic impact on the fishing activities that take place in the area (see presentation).

Fishing industry representatives responded that the total economic impact for the South Fork Wind project calculated in the economic analysis was too low. Specific comments included: Fishing tournaments are not adequately reflected. Using VTR data for the for-hire fleet is not reliable. It was also pointed out that the study missed the offshore effort which may not be recorded by VTR. They also questioned the numbers for groundfishing effort on Cox Ledge which seem to be underrepresented and should be reconsidered.

Presenters acknowledged that there is considerably more RI fishing effort in the project area analysis, but it would be helpful to get data on MA effort (e.g. Kirkpatrick study). Hauke explained that costs incurred if detours have to be made around, length of days at sea were considered but because of small footprint of project plus the fact that 1 NM allows transit, there would not be a substantial requirement for detours.

It was suggested that presenters refer to the Kneebone analysis. The Ørsted team follow up with Mike Pierdinock and with Patrick Paquette after the meeting.

Pilot Regional Fisheries Studies: Overview & Status (Nils Bolgen, MassCEC)

Nils provided an overview of projects sponsored by BOEM, RIDEM and MassCEC:

- HMS project, Net surveys for larval lobster and fish neuston – data collected and being processed. More reporting later this calendar year.
- INSPIRE: Standard approaches for benthic mapping. Acoustic or imagery. The project is underway and reporting to be done in 2022.
- URI Fishing Vessel Status using AIS. Big data/machine learning to determine if a vessel is fishing or underway while out at sea. This is a long-term effort and involves lots of engagement with other parties. Just getting into the meat of it.
- New Bedford Port Authority: Still hope to do this project that looks at approaches to regulation. Barbara Stone at NBPA. Engaged, but unable to kick this off based on capacity issues.

Nils invited feedback on data collection and how to present results.

Responsible Offshore Science Alliance Update (Mike Pol, Division of Marine Fisheries)
This segment of the agenda will be moved to the next meeting.

Other Announcements/Updates/Next Meeting

Action items:

- Staff will follow up with input on draft TOR to be sent to Lisa Engler (Lisa.Engler@mass.gov) or to Dan McKiernan (Dan.McKiernan@mass.gov).
- Attendees to provide input to the Ørsted team on the Potential Economic Impact Analysis.
- The next meeting will be scheduled for early May.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 PM.