

## MA Fisheries Working Group on Offshore Wind

*Virtual Meeting – March 31, 2023*

---

### MEETING SUMMARY

#### Updates from Massachusetts

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

- Hollie Emery, MA CZM, reviewed an [Interactive Map of Offshore Wind in Southern New England](#). Several members suggested improvements and Hollie mentioned that MA CZM is always open to feedback and information to help improve the map.
- Lisa Engler reviewed the Regional Fisheries Compensatory Mitigation Initiative Request For Information (RFI). Lisa noted that the comment period for the RFI closed in February. The Special Initiative on Offshore Wind (SIOW) in collaboration with the Consensus Building Institute (CBI) took those comments and updated the RFI and Scoping Document which will be released at the end of April. After formalizing and codifying those comments, the state will move forward and create someone to be a regional administrator of the mitigation fund. More information can be found [here](#).
- Lisa updated the group on the boulder and seafloor disturbance in southern New England. The seabed disturbance was not anticipated in the permitting process. The State's agencies did meet to discuss this and laid out guidance for developers and key questions. The goal is to minimize impacts on fishing activities. The state is planning to meet with federal agencies and bring back a draft framework for consideration by the fisheries.
- Lisa delivered an overview of the Massachusetts Commercial Fisheries Commission. This is a public body created by the Massachusetts legislature. Dan McKiernan and Lisa will chair it. This body will be made up of 16 members appointed by the governor. Dan mentioned that the group has not convened yet as all members are not fully appointed. The expiration of the Commission is 8 years out.
- Jess Hiltz, Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC), delivered an update on the various regional fisheries studies. For more details, please see the presentation slides posted on the [MA Fisheries Working Group on Offshore Wind website](#).
- Lisa Engler delivered a brief update for the Responsible Offshore Science Alliance (ROSA) in place of Mike Pol. More information can be found in the presentation slides.

#### Fishing Industry Updates

- Jackie Odell (Northeast Seafood Coalition): Through the Seafood Collaborative and Massachusetts congressional support, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation program will provide funding which will be a significant boost to the groundfish industry. Jackie mentioned once the role of the Fishery Commission is clarified that they will be looking forward to working with them.
- Beth Casoni (Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association (MLA)): MLA had their annual weekend. State agencies and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) came to

deliver updates to the industry and various offshore wind developers. The fishermen gave feedback that they were happy to have questions answered by developers. Some key feedback was that fishermen do not want to hear about wind farms from overseas as they find that information not to be helpful, and they tend to be cautious. BOEM will bring their “fisheries 101” conversations back to their websites which have information from 8 to 10 years ago. The hope is that this will help inform the conversation with offshore wind development in the Gulf of Maine.

- Angela Sanfilippo (Gloucester Fisherman’s Wives Development Program): The Gloucester Fisherman’s Wives Development Program received a federal appropriation to study how to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the industry. The group will be working with Sea Grant. The work will not begin until August. Angela attended the Maine Fisherman’s Forum which was dedicated to the Offshore Wind issue. She noted that Maine fishermen are really upset about the development of offshore wind. Currently, safety drill courses are underway for trout season and preparing to move into the summer seasons for fishing.

### **RODA, NMFS, and URI Update on the Integrated Ecosystem Assessment (IEA)**

Sean Lucey, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), delivered a presentation on the IEA for fisheries and offshore wind development. Sean gave background on how the IEA is supposed to help decide on how to act on issues. It is a tool to achieve multiple ecosystem objectives through an incremental and collaborative approach. Right now, with the various federal partners, there is an attempt to apply the IEA to the wind development process in the Gulf of Maine.

Sean walked through the various key steps in the development of this IEA. These steps include: defining ecosystem management (EBM) goals and targets, development of a conceptual model to help with scoping, identifying key indicators to assess the socio-ecological system, a state of the ecosystem report, developing risk assessments, and evaluating strategies and potential outcomes.

For the Gulf of Maine, they are currently in the scoping phase through the summer, which will include kickoff webinars with fishing sectors and industries and a series of workshops with stakeholders. Indicator development will take place in the summer of 2023 into the spring of 2024. This is followed by the risk assessment and final evaluations starting in spring 2024.

Further information can be found at: <https://www.integratedecosystemassessment.noaa.gov/> and <https://rodafisheries.org/portfolio/iea/>

- Q: Will you be applying this to mid-Atlantic states in their processes? A: *Currently, we are just focused on the Gulf of Maine. The Mid-Atlantic is very far ahead compared to the Gulf of Maine. We could possibly apply the infrastructure with products produced in the Gulf of Maine to other regions. We will do our best to inform other regions.*
- Q: Will global warming be included in these assessments? A: *Global warming and climate change will be a part of the equation.*

## Developer Updates

### **Vineyard Wind 1, Vineyard Wind:**

Crista Bank provided updates from Vineyard Wind. The nearshore and offshore cable sections are installed for Vineyard Wind 1. For the western nearshore cable section, Vineyard Wind was unable to achieve the target burial depth with a jetting tool due to hard bottom near Spindle Rock. Vineyard Wind worked with the state on appropriate cable protection. Vineyard Wind decided to use mattresses made of concrete with a top cover of sand to mimic the nearby sediments.

The mid-section cable installation is in progress. For offshore construction, scour protection is in progress at 17 locations and will continue through May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Monopile installation is estimated to start in mid-May. Finally, Vineyard Wind is making enhanced mariner information available for fishermen through its website. Vineyard Wind is also working with those on the docks in Rhode Island and New Bedford to help put files on plotters.

For the compensatory mitigation information, Vineyard Wind is currently administering the funds but is looking for a 3<sup>rd</sup> party administrator to administer the funds in the future. Fishing industry members are helping other fishermen look into availability of funds and eligibility.

- Q: Will the plotter files have the location of cables and secondary cable coverage? A: *This is not included as most cables will be buried so that wouldn't be needed unless there are cables that need protection and are not buried.*
- Q: Will cables be buried once laid or will natural sediment be relied upon to cover the cables? A: *Areas are filled in naturally and should be able to cover them*
- Q: Was the intent of the mitigation fund to cover existing permits? Is that a part of the plan? A: *This is still being discussed.*
- Q: Could all cables be marked? A: *They can follow up about this. The plan is not to mark all cables, but this is open to discussion.*
- Q: How often do you check these cables? A: *We have to check them every 6 months to a year for habitat as well as after every storm. We can look at post-construction burial requirements for further information.*

### **New England Wind, Avangrid**

Caela Howard delivered updates for the Avangrid on the New England (NE) Wind project. Avangrid had several permitting updates which included cabling updates for NE Wind 1 and NE Wind 2. Their deep geotechnical survey is still underway with several survey plans for the remainder of 2023 under consideration. Avangrid is developing their fisheries monitoring plan which will address comments from multiple agencies and they have additional fisheries studies underway. Finally, Avangrid has participated in multiple events recently to engage with local fisheries. See slides for more details.

## **Beacon Wind, Equinor**

EJ Marohn delivered brief updates from Equinor. The major update is that their New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) monitoring plan timeline is updated. On March 6<sup>th</sup>, NYSERDA approved their monitoring plan. The next phase is for Equinor to contract with (ROSA) and the Regional Wildlife Science Collaborative (RWSC) to start developing the RFP.

## **SouthCoast Wind 1, SouthCoast Wind**

Erin Healy from SouthCoast Wind delivered updates. SouthCoast Wind currently has several surveys starting up which include a geotechnical survey that will be completed in April and a geophysical survey starting in mid-May. For permitting, the draft environmental impact report (EIR) is under Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) review. The public comment period for that EIR ended March 27<sup>th</sup>. The draft environmental impact statement (EIS) is under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review with BOEM. The final public hearing for that draft EIS was on March 27<sup>th</sup>. The public comment period will end April 3<sup>rd</sup>. NOTE: subsequently extended to April 18<sup>th</sup>. SouthCoast Wind is developing its fishery monitoring plan as well and will be sending any additional updates to fishery representatives.

## **Sunrise Wind and South Fork Wind, Orsted**

Chris Sarro from Orsted delivered updates on the Sunrise Wind and South Fork Wind projects. South Fork, has several construction activities ongoing including seabed preparation and export cable construction. Orsted has been delivering twice weekly email updates regarding survey activities which include traffic models. Other updates include the start of the pre-lay grapnel run campaign, displacing boulders from cable routes, and details about their offshore cable installation. For further information on those updates and next steps, please see the slides.

## **Revolution Wind Fisheries Compensation Package**

Jesper Christensen, Orsted, and Hauke L. Kite-Powell, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute (WHOI), delivered a presentation on Revolution Wind's compensatory mitigation package for fisheries. Hauke went through the various inputs (fisheries landings, fisheries values, economic multipliers, and other key data) that were used to produce the estimates for the compensatory package.

Jesper described the types of mitigation frameworks and possible plans that are in development for further review based on the WHOI analysis. Currently, Orsted is developing a commercial fisheries compensation fund (direct financial mitigation to the commercial fishing industry), a coastal community fund (benefits the fishing community and associated industries), and a navigational assistance and training program which has already been developed. There will be a presentation to MA fishing industry representatives once this is fully developed.

- Q: There are multiple concerns about the numbers and data being used to develop the fund. Participants would like to see more conversations with fishermen before further action is taken. A: *The Orsted team is open to discussing the methodology with those in*

*the fishing industry to better discuss the process and what this could look like in the future.*

### **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. Lisa anticipates that there will be a shorter meeting to discuss the Revolution Wind compensatory fund. The next meeting will more than likely be in June.

Meeting adjourned at 12:40 PM