

## MA Fisheries Working Group on Offshore Wind

*Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries Offices in New Bedford, MA  
SMAST / UMass Dartmouth East*

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*May 10, 2024*

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### MEETING SUMMARY

*Meeting slides are available on the Fisheries Working Group on Offshore Wind [website](#).*

## Updates from Massachusetts

Dan McKiernan and Justin Bopp, Massachusetts Department of Marine Fisheries (DMF), and Hollie Emery and Todd Callaghan, Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM), shared the following updates.

- Alison Brizius started her new position as Assistant Secretary and Director of CZM.
- The 11 state Regional Fund Administrator (RFA) process is underway. A recent meeting discussed the make-up of the design and oversight committee (DOC) and engagement with fisheries stakeholders. The DOC will be composed of fishing community, state, and developer representatives, and give technical details on the claims process. Applications to design the fund and claims process are being reviewed.
- The Vineyard Wind Innovation Fund panel met in April. This fund is for research and navigation and safety upgrades for fishing vessels. Vessels with Massachusetts home ports, and non-profits and fishing businesses in Massachusetts are eligible, though eligibility may expand as the effects of offshore wind are increasingly known. The panel will meet again in June to identify criteria for proposal evaluation. This fund may merge or at least coordinate with other innovation and shoreside funds.
- CZM and Regional Wildlife Science Collaborative for Offshore Wind (RWSC) are working to add developer data of relocated boulder locations to the Northeast Ocean Data Portal.
- Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) has issued the fourth solicitation for offshore wind through 83 C IV Procurement. DOER is actively reviewing the four received bids.

## Massachusetts Offshore Wind Roadmap Strategic Plan

Seth Lattrell, VHB, shared information about the offshore wind roadmap strategic plan (strategic plan) that was initiated by the interagency offshore wind council. The development process began in January 2024 and includes regular meetings with the steering committee, interagency

offshore wind council, sub-committee meetings, and stakeholder interviews. Stakeholder interviews have focused on work force, ports, energy needs, transmission, and ecology.

Todd Callaghan, CZM, shared that this strategic plan will help the state give guidance to developers on how to design arrays and cable placement.

The following questions (Q) and comments (C) were shared by the working group:

- Q: We all agree that monitoring and understanding of ecological processes within fisheries is important. How does the plan deal with seafood if seafood reduction occurs?  
*A: This is not a master plan that offers a solution for every concern. Rather, it identifies potential issues and develops a roadmap to address them. Lisa Engler, MassCEC, added that the plan will lay out recommendations on where the state can do better. We want to hear from stakeholders about how the questions should be framed, what the right data to gather is, and who we need to work with to answer these questions.*
- C: The plan – or the government more broadly – needs a plan b if the assumptions you have made about the impacts of offshore wind on fisheries are wrong. Plan b should not be giving money to fishermen and not fish – or, paying fishermen to not leave the dock – as this will tank the commercial fishing industry. The plan also needs to consider the cumulative impact of offshore wind projects.
- C: The plan should consider fishermen, not just the boat owners. There needs to be remedial funds or compensation for the actual fishermen.
- C: The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) engagement is sub-par because virtual and in-person meetings are separated, which results in obscured participant lists. BOEM is purposefully limiting visibility amongst participants and minimizing speaking time. *A: Zach Jylkka, BOEM, shared that Zoom webinars, which are used for larger public meetings, do have hidden participant lists. BOEM is not purposefully being secretive but hears the concern. BOEM can consider ways to increase transparency.*
- C: There are two questions regarding seafood production: 1) are wind turbines going to have an impact on abundance, and 2) are individual vessels going to make the business decision to not fish within arrays. It will be helpful to see who goes into Vineyard Wind once it is fully constructed. Sharing agreements among users may be needed if boats that previously fished in the array location now fish beside it. The Mid-Atlantic Council may be able to support agreement development.
- C: The recreational fishing and for-hire fishing industries also need to be considered as users as they will be competing for access to the fisheries. We need to think about changes to conditions after construction; if cod are displaced and the area becomes mainly black sea bass, which can be fished nearshore, the whole blue economy (e.g., tournaments) will change.
- Q: Can you elaborate on Massachusetts' employment goals for offshore wind? *A: Massachusetts has been good at developing targets for employment goals in the climate tech industry and wants to apply that to offshore wind. We have not gotten there in the plan development yet. If you have suggestions, please share them in writing.*
- Q: The strategic plan needs to carefully consider cumulative impacts of the offshore wind industry. Each developer is responsible for their own environmental impact, but the holistic impact needs to be considered. *A: Todd Callaghan, CZM, requested that*

*academics share ideas on how the state should approach considering cumulative impacts.*

## Gulf of Maine Wind Energy Areas and Proposed Sale Notice

Zach Jylkka, BOEM, presented on the Proposed Sale Notice (PSN), which was released a week before the meeting. He reviewed the renewable energy authorization process, which spans from process initiation through decommissioning. The PSN is the first of the leasing stages, and the PSN release triggers a 60 day comment period. This proposed lease area is almost one million acres, a 90% reduction from the original call area, with an expected 15 GW combined capacity. The 15 GW estimate is uncertain due to turbine technology and arrangement. The proposed lease area was determined based on feedback on the final Wind Energy Areas, and avoids specific hatcheries and habitat, keeps transit in certain areas, and maintains leases within ~75 miles of interconnection points. Zach shared additional information on transit corridors, and total and developable lease area, and shared maps showing many layers of interest.

The PSN includes the proposed auction format and scoring criteria, and BOEM is seeking comments on both during the PSN comment period. BOEM is working to spread word of the PSN and comment period, and will share this overview presentation at many meetings, host three in-person open houses, and host virtual meetings by sector.

The following questions (Q) and comments (C) were shared by the working group:

- C: Thank you for considering a Cape Cod meeting on the PSN as it is hard for Cape Cod fishermen to get north of Boston during rush hour and prime groundfish season.
- Q: Why did BOEM leave two lease areas with no transit lanes between them? The Good Neighbor idea (where leases with a shared boundary need two common lines of orientation or a setback) is good, but leaving a transit lane would show the prioritization of transit in the northern lease area. *A: BOEM is aiming for clear paths from the shore to other areas, and was concerned about removing viable swaths of land from available lease areas. If you add a transit corridor to the southern conjoined lease, it dead ends in a different lease. However, BOEM is open to adjustments so please comment on the PSN.*
- Q: Looking at the North Atlantic right whale (NARW) distribution map, why did BOEM not select lease areas with the lowest density of NARW? *A: BOEM avoided areas with the highest NARW density, but had to balance NARW presence with other factors. For example, BOEM was trying to avoid interfering with the lobster industry and other habitat, and avoid lease areas so far offshore that they would be more expensive to build.*
- C: With regards to floating turbine technology, BOEM should choose the lesser of two evils; the taught rope technology would have less of an impact on the fishing community than the octopus ropes.
- C: I would like to thank BOEM for this process. Lease determination in other regions should have followed this process. BOEM is clearly considering our comments.

- Q: BOEM should be more prescriptive in determining what technology developers should use in the lease development. For example, clustering turbines would make the area more fishable. At what point will you encourage preferred technologies to further deconflict the lease area? *A: BOEM tends not to be prescriptive about development within a lease, partially because we know that the technology continues to advance in this emerging industry. These leases have a communications plan stipulation, which aims to add a layer of accountability for developers by requiring them to report on engagement and resulting changes every six months. Fishermen should be sure to make their interests known to developers, and monitor any changes in the communications plans. BOEM did leave the lease areas intentionally large so that clustering could occur within each.*
- C: There are few fishermen in Plymouth and Danvers, the sites of the open houses. We recommend BOEM come to the Cape or somewhere south of Boston. *A: If there is interest, BOEM can look into a Cape Cod meeting.*
- C: The Gulf of Maine has unique ocean currents. Oceanographic models exist for the southern edge, where the water starts to drain to the Great South Channel. Developers could already start looking at different turbine structure types in these models to determine the range of effects possible.
- C: I would prefer an open house in Gloucester rather than Danvers. *A: BOEM looked at large meeting locations in Gloucester but they were full due to graduation and prom.*
- Q: What is the best way to share comments on the PSN? Will participants share comments at the public meetings? *A: There will be a comment station where participants can write, record, or type comments at the in-person meetings. There will not be a verbal comment period where participants hear others' comments.*
- Q: The combined capacity assumption must depend on turbine height and distribution. What is the assumed density for the 15 GW expected combined capacity? *A: The estimate comes from an NREL report that can be shared after the meeting. It is the best estimate based on published literature, but we do not know what energy density to expect.*
- Q: At what point will it be determined if AC or DC power is used? One requires substations with discharged water, which affects environmental impacts. *A: That is not yet determined. Developers will propose design envelopes in their Construction and Operations Plans, which will then trigger permitting and the National Environmental Policy Act process. This decision will not be made for a long time, and will depend on the economics at hand and regulating agency decisions.*
- Q: Has BOEM made a decision about landward subsurface cables? *A: BOEM has heard the desire to minimize cable landing footprints. This conversation also involves grid upgrades, and needs to include players beyond BOEM, e.g., ISO New England, grid operators, the states, FERC.*
- Q: The western Gulf of Maine area intersects four cod stock management areas. Is there research on the impact on those four biological units? *A: The Council is going through a rulemaking process on this, which will likely come into effect in 2027. This certainly feeds into the analysis of any proposed project.*
- C: It is good to see concerns of the public being incorporated into lease area identification.

- Q: Can you say more about AC versus DC? A: *To date there has not been a floating substation deployed for AC or DC. A DC station will be larger and more complex to float. A lot of technological advancement is required for that to occur.*
- Q: Will fishing be allowed in transit corridors? A: *Yes, fishing will be allowed except in active construction areas. It will be up to fishermen and their insurance companies to determine if they will choose to fish in transit corridors. The transit corridor width determination looked at transit needs not fishing ones.*
- Q: Has there been consideration about requirements for cable routing, e.g., grouped routing? A: *BOEM has heard desire from the public for coordinated transmission. This requires a lot of complicated coordination between local, state, and federal governments. BOEM has a role to play in explaining the importance of coordinated transmission, but states have a lot of control with procurement. New Jersey, for example, wants coordinated transmission and prioritizes it in their solicitations.*
- Q: Is BOEM considering national security in lease planning? An outside entity could cripple the country by compromising a few lease areas. A: *BOEM consults with the Department of Defence siting clearinghouse, and they have provided comments on the siting process.*
- Q: Is there a regulatory process that would lease areas in the final Wind Energy Area that were not included in the PSN? A: *I do not believe there is a mechanism for rescinding a final Wind Energy Area because a final Wind Energy Area does not authorize any activities. Perhaps it could happen but it has never happened to date. Secretary Haaland announced a second Gulf of Maine renewable energy lease sale in 2028 as an ambition for this administration. That would be dependent on the federal administration at that time, the states, consultations with Tribes, and stakeholder engagement. One option would be to auction any of the eight lease areas not sold in this auction.*

## Fishing Industry Updates

Beth Casoni, Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association (MLA), shared that MLA is helping fishermen apply for direct compensation funds. Many are reluctant to apply. MLA is also working on a project to collect and aggregate fishing data to help with future compensation efforts as many lobstermen do not have VMS data.

Ron Smolowitz, Coonamassett Farm Foundation & Woods Hole Oyster Co., shared that the scallop industry has a \$2 billion impact on the economy, and the bulk of that lands in Massachusetts. The industry is cyclical and is currently hurting. Vessels are looking for additional funding streams, and could be helpful in research, predator control, and gear development and testing. Congressional funds were designated for training and equipping roughly twelve vessels with scientific information collection abilities, which allows fishing vessels to bring in additional income. Coonamassett Farm Foundation is now developing a program to train fishermen to collect scientific data. This effort is a proof of concept and will hopefully expand if successful. One regulatory challenge is that the U.S. Coast Guard requires these vessels to be certified as research vessels.

The following questions (Q) and comments (C) were shared by the working group:

- C: It is a great opportunity for fishing vessels to get outfitted to do this work. Forty four fishing vessels have been involved in the Vineyard Wind 1 project from research to construction. Fishing vessels monitor for safety and communication, deploy buoys, etc. Vineyard Wind has helped fishermen go through U.S. Coast Guard licensing classes and testing process. We are hoping that MassCEC will fund future licensing processes. We want fishing vessels to be able to supplement their income with research trips.
- Q: Have these fishing vessels been fully transformed into research vessels? *A: These vessels still have fishing permits. These vessels have three modes of operation: 1) a fishing trip that simultaneously collects fishery dependent data, 2) a fishing trip that simultaneously collects additional environmental data, and 3) a research trip. It would be helpful if developers standardized their monitoring programs to minimize the research-only trips taken. Senator Warren's office, who helped obtain the funding, also wants climate change monitoring data collected. We need a unified strategy to collect data at a lower cost.*

## Offshore Wind Developer Updates

### Vineyard Wind 1

Crista Banks shared that the offshore export cable has been installed and lands off of Cobles Beach. Cable target burial depth (5 - 8') was reached for 99.9% of the cable. The 3' area near the beach landing, and not in towable territory, that did not meet target depth received a stretch of eco mattresses which allows for growth on mattresses and habitat recovery. There is no cooling water needed for the electric surface platform, as it uses AC, not DC, cables.

Fisheries surveys continued last year during construction. A lot of coordination occurred with the marine command center, and fishing was still possible in and around the turbines. Within the lease area, there is scour protection at 62 locations, 47 monopiles, and 12 full turbines. Interarray cables, tower development, and monopile construction will occur this summer.

Vineyard Wind collaborated with the Responsible Offshore Development Alliance (RODA) and developed recommendations to include Automatic Identification Systems (AIS) on 18 turbines. The U.S. Coast Guard, however, is concerned about radar blocking and is only allowing AIS on peripheral structures. If participants are unhappy with this, reach out to the U.S. Coast Guard or Vineyard Wind.

Vineyard Wind has released a notice of intent, completed a round of virtual meetings, and is beginning an environmental assessment for the Vineyard Wind East lease area. Vineyard Wind has a bid with Massachusetts to sell electricity from that project. The proposed cable goes south and then to Connecticut.

### SouthCoast Wind

Sam Asci shared that SouthCoast Wind is now entirely owned by Ocean Wind. He shared permitting updates. SouthCoast Wind has been developing their fisheries compensation program with Massachusetts fishermen for their Massachusetts federal consistency review. Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute (WHOI) helped with the baseline assessment and exposure analysis to determine relative value and amount of revenue exposed to project impacts. SouthCoast Wind used this information to develop the compensation fund for commercial and for-hire fishermen. There are two parts: \$4,217,000 in direct compensation (for which eligibility criteria are still being developed), and \$1,500,000 to the Massachusetts fisheries innovation fund (an existing fund established through Vineyard Wind's federal consistency review).

### Bluepoint Wind

Diana Glinos introduced the Bluepoint Wind, one of the New York Bight projects. There are no active surveys at the moment, and geotechnical work will begin in the lease area later in 2024. More communication about that will be shared closer to the date. Bluepoint Wind posts updates and flyers for mariners on their website. The current outreach priority is navigation safety and project design, and Bluepoint Wind will reach out to commercial and recreational fishermen on those topics.

The following questions (Q) and comments (C) were shared by the working group:

- C: The information shared on the number of homes powered by these wind farms annually is overly simplified for participants who know more about energy use.

### Ørsted

John Mansolillo shared that Ørsted brought the desire from fishermen for more AIS to the U.S. Coast Guard Advisory Committee, and encouraged participants in favor of more AIS on turbines to share it with the U.S. Coast Guard.

South Fork Wind, south of Rhode Island with cables to New York, is complete and fishable. Ørsted has handed over operations and maintenance.

Revolution Wind has received all federal permits and the first monopile is being constructed. The project will use AC stations. Multiple ports are being used in the construction process. Export cable work is happening this summer and fall, despite coordination challenges. Concrete mattresses will be used when cable target burial depth is not met.

Sunrise Wind, south of Revolution Wind, will begin construction later this year near shore. Ørsted has a bid out now for Starboard Wind.

The following questions (Q) and comments (C) were shared by the working group:

- Q: Is there an in demand signal that is activated when in the area? A: *U.S. Coast Guard will share a geographic pin on the chart blotter, but it will not clutter like a vessel.*

### Equinor

Elizabeth Marchetti shared that Beacon Wind is now under sole ownership of BP. This summer, Empire Wind 1 work includes removing out of service cables and collecting debris. Equinor will provide information on boulder movement, and have an offshore Fisheries Liaison Officer

onboard during all summer work. This is the second year of Empire Wind 1 monitoring. Fishing vessels are involved in the monitoring. Equinor will share fisheries and benthic monitoring data, and their data availability plan is informed by RODA, RWSC, and NYSERDA.

The following questions (Q) and comments (C) were shared by the working group:

- Q: What is the plan for boulder relocation? *A: Equinor will provide details about boulder relocation. It is unclear as of now if boulders will be moved to one centralized location.*

## Fisheries Compensation Funds Updates

### South Fork Wind

Ross Pearsall, Ørsted, and Tom Pannell, PKFOD and technical assistance provider (TAP) for the compensation fund, shared an update on the fisheries compensation plan for South Fork Wind. There is \$1.9 million available for direct claims, \$300,000 available for the navigation enhancement and training program, and \$200,000 available for the coastal community fund. Ross noted that the Revolution Wind compensation plan is not yet established but will be shared soon, and is expected to look similar to the South Fork fund.

The South Fork Wind fisheries compensation fund is administered by PKFOD. The same application is used to apply for the direct compensation, and navigation enhancement and training program funds. Applications have been accepted since fall 2023 via the website <https://www.fisheriescompensationprogram.com/>.

PKFOD shared an update on the application progress: Rhode Island has received more applications than Massachusetts. PKFOD has not denied any applications to date. They are calling, texting, emailing, and meeting in person with fishermen, and working to accept data in many different formats to prove eligibility. To date, \$107,000 has been distributed to two fishermen in Rhode Island, and 11 have been deemed eligible. Mainly gillnetters and trawlers have applied for these funds.

The following questions (Q) and comments (C) were shared by the working group:

- Q: Is it too early to assess response rate? *A: Yes. We are still increasing awareness about the funds and application process.*
- Q: Has the \$107,000 distributed been given to two or 11 fishermen? *That money was distributed to two fishermen.*
- Q: When does the eligibility period close for South Fork? *A: There is no closing period at this point to apply. There will be a closing date to show economic harm but the date has not yet been determined.*
- Q: Is the money distributed as a one-time payment or over time? *A: This funding is for direct harm and is distributed once per economic harm.*
- Q: Did the two fishermen that received money demonstrate a lost catch? *A: Yes, they received money for seafood that did not cross the dock.*

### Vineyard Wind 1



Crista Banks shared information about the Vineyard Wind 1 fisheries compensation fund. There are two key differences from the South Fork fund: (1) fishermen do not need to prove economic loss. Vineyard Wind assumes that construction and operations will have effects, so fishermen only need to prove a history of fishing in the area. (2) There is a deadline to apply (June 3, 2024). Fishermen can apply here: <http://vw1fisheriescomp.com/application/>.

A third party administrator will run the website, review submitted data, and support fishermen in their applications. Fishing industry representatives will also review data.

Excess money from the direct compensation fund will be funneled into the innovation fund. This is not a perfect fund, and any comments on it should be shared with the future regional fund administrator.

The following questions (Q) and comments (C) were shared by the working group:

- Q: What is the schedule to roll over funds to the innovation fund once the direct compensation fund closes? Could it happen before five years? *A: Depending on the number of applicants, this could likely happen earlier. This is likely up to the third party administrator.*
- C: The export cable area should be included in future compensation processes. *A: Vineyard Wind issued a one-time payment for fixed gear fishermen during cable installation.*
- Q: How is revenue determined? *A: Fishermen submit the average of their three highest income years over a seven year period, and Vineyard Wind pays a set percentage of that.*

## South Fork Navigation Enhancement and Training Program

Ross Pearsall, Ørsted, shared that the Commonwealth sent ideas to improve the program – e.g., radar upgrades and trainings, AIS on as many vessels as possible – which are reasonable and being considered by Ørsted.

This program accompanies the direct compensation and gear claims programs as part of the package for fishermen. Eligibility for the navigation enhancement and training program follows the same process as direct compensation eligibility; apply to PKFOD. Eligible commercial and for-hire vessels can receive funds for radar and AIS installation and training. There is a list of approved equipment and training providers that fishermen can go to directly without having to front the costs. Reach out if you want other providers added to the list. To date, eleven vessels have been deemed eligible and two have received upgrades.

The following questions (Q) and comments (C) were shared by the working group:

- C: The letter from the Commonwealth included our interest in spreading money to non-eligible vessels if it was being spent at a slower rate than anticipated. This would cover vessels that transit through or fish near the wind turbines but do not have direct losses. This approach could be used across innovation funds.
- C: I would like a list of all developers and their contact people.

## Next Steps and Closing

Dan McKiernan closed the meeting and reviewed next steps. He shared closing thoughts, including that the in-person meeting was valuable but that more time would be helpful.

- DMF and CZM:
  - Develop and share a project contact list that includes a map.
- BOEM:
  - Share NREL report on combined capacity for Gulf of Maine