

# MA Fisheries Working Group on Offshore Wind

*June 14, 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm*

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## MEETING SUMMARY

Lisa Engler opened the meeting. After review of the agenda, Lisa introduced Undersecretary Beth Card who made brief opening remarks thanking the group for its role in guiding the development of offshore wind lease areas identified by BOEM.

### **Proposed Fisheries Working Group Terms of Reference**

Lisa Engler provided an update on the proposed draft Terms of Reference (TORs) for the Fisheries Work Group. Input and feedback were received with suggestions on allowing time for input by stakeholders during the meetings, as well as including topics on specific details of projects as they move through the permitting process towards construction. Lisa indicated that the agenda for this meeting includes a slot for feedback from the fishing community (in response to that suggestion). She acknowledged the need for more discussion on specific topics that may be done through smaller group conversations.

Lisa invited participants to continue providing feedback on the TORs.

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

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

- INSPIRE Environmental - Acoustic telemetry for HMS project (with the New England Aquarium). First season data collected and processed. Second season data collected this summer and reporting should be completed by January 2022.
- UMass Dartmouth/MLA - Net surveys for lobster larvae and fish neuston. Most surveys were conducted in May and June, so the project is being extended for a second season. Final report due in Spring 2022. Looking into including concurrent study for copepods to support understanding of predator-prey location for whales.
- INSPIRE Environmental - Standard approaches for Acoustic and Imagery Data. Seabed habitat study to develop standardized approaches for synthesizing acoustic and imagery data. The project is underway and reporting to be done in 2022.
- URI - Fishing Status using Vessel AIS Data and Machine Learning. Big data/machine learning to determine vessel activity: fishing or underway. This is a long-term effort and involves significant engagement with other parties. Getting VTR data proved to be more challenging due to confidentiality concerns. Project timeline delayed. Project will continue into 2022 and beyond.
- New Bedford Port Authority – Comparative Analysis of Regulation in Europe and Japan. Project will assess policy approaches regarding the coexistence of fishing with offshore wind in Europe and Japan. Project delayed.

Nils concluded by stating that the FWG will have the opportunity to hear from the PIs for each of these projects at upcoming working group meetings - starting at the next quarterly meeting.

### **Offshore Wind Developer Updates:**

#### *Vineyard Wind (Erik Peckar)*

Erik Peckar provided an update of the status of the Vineyard Wind projects (see presentation). Currently the group is conducting geological surveys and this provides opportunities for fishermen to participate (scouting for gear and avoiding impacts).

SMAST reviewed the fisheries responses and results are available as well as feedback at this link. [[www.vineyardwind.com/events/2021/6/s/SMAST-fisheries-surveys](http://www.vineyardwind.com/events/2021/6/s/SMAST-fisheries-surveys)]. Surveys will continue in 2021 (3<sup>rd</sup> year). Aerial surveys for bird species in lease area 522 are conducted monthly or bimonthly during the migratory season.

Future development will take place in the lease area Vineyard Wind South which will have two projects: 1) Park City Wind (CT) will be south of VW1 and will use the same cable pathway, providing 804 MW to CT. 2) Rest of Zone is the second part with a potential generation of 1200-1500 MW. COP was submitted in June 2020 and an NOI issued to prepare EIS on 6/30/2021. Cables will make landfall in Barnstable. Public comment period with NOI.

*In response to questions, Crista explained that they have heard that fishermen on the water have observed that after geotechnical/geophysical surveys, fish distributions change. This is sometimes observed when G&G surveys are out. Research efforts to address this topic are not known.*

#### *Equinor (Elizabeth Marchetti)*

Elizabeth Marchetti presented an update on the latest work conducted by Equinor (see presentation). Beacon Wind 1 is located in the MA lease area. Equinor is also planning a project of 150 14-MW turbines, with a 1x1 NM grid. This has the capability of generating >2.4 GW and powering >1 million homes. A 174 km HDVC cable will make landfall in Astoria, NY. Consultation with NY fishermen through in-person meetings helped through discussion of various route options and there will be more opportunities in the future. Equinor has also been working closely with fisheries groups to assist with outreach efforts.

A gear claim process has been put in place. So far, no claims have been brought forward. An HMS study with NEAq (Kneebone) on acoustic telemetry and recreational fishery monitoring has been initiated in 2020 and will continue to be expanded into 2022. Overall the project is ahead of the permitting schedule.

#### *Mayflower (Joel Southhall)*

Joel Southhall presented an update on the Mayflower Wind project (see presentation). The Mayflower project will be located in the MA lease area. Geophysical and geoarchaeological

surveys were conducted in 2020 (2<sup>nd</sup> season). More recently Mayflower reached an agreement with Anbaric to bring offshore wind also to Brayton Point in Somerset. The reason for this second cable route and landing fall is to accommodate the 1600MW power being generated and then brought to land. See the [website](#) for events and press release.

*In response to questions by participants, Joel indicated that the reason for expansion to a second cable routing is because there is a limit to how much power can be placed at a transmission connection point. The survey process for the Brayton Pt. route is still in planning phase and notices to mariners will be issued accordingly. Studies will be conducted in late summer 2021 and locations will be shared with folks who have local experience about gear location.*

#### *Ørsted (Ed LeBlanc and Melanie Gearon)*

Ed LeBlanc provided a brief update on the Ørsted projects in the offshore wind area (see presentation). He focused on two main components currently underway: 1) gear conflict with offshore wind including avoidance measures being put in place, notice to mariners and others ([see website](#)). 2) claims process – Ørsted has developed a gear claim application process that includes filing of claim within 30 days, describes the documentation requested, and requires a description of economic loss.

*In response to questions, Ed explained that there was no limit to the number of claims that can be made by one entity in a year. However, he emphasized the importance that only claims that are believed to be due to conflict with turbines belonging to Ørsted should be filed.*

#### *Ørsted: South Fork (Melanie Gearon)*

Melanie Gearon provided an update on the South Fork Project ([see presentation](#)). She described project modifications and mitigation. The project will include 12 turbines (reduced from 15) in a 1x1 NM grid, each generating 11-MW. Less than 1% of the lease area (0486) will be covered by the turbines. The project will not be located in Massachusetts waters, rather it will be 19 miles east of Block Island and make land fall in Long Island Sound. Numerous modifications resulted from conversations with fishermen and with other stakeholders, including making sure cables are buried sufficiently, instituting fishery scout vessels, and increased communication during offshore surveys. Offshore work will continue in spring through fall of 2023 (with a TOY restriction for NARWs).

*In response to questions on cable burials, Melanie answered that target depth of 4-6 ft will be sought. Some participants expressed concern about cables becoming exposed and strongly recommended at least a 10 ft burial depth due to the dynamics of the seafloor.*

*Participants asked what plans the company has for decommissioning. Melanie explained this will include severing the turbines below the seabed surface, but it is likely that not all the*

*buried components will be removed. Participants expressed concern about having more detailed and concrete decommissioning plans that include removing “everything” and all traces of the project.*

*Question: If there is soft substrate will cables be buried deeper or will concrete mattresses be used?*

*Response (Melanie): A risk assessment is performed for the cable route and cable burial portion of the project. Where cables will be buried deeper it indicates that generally the substrate is less stable. In harder substrate, burial is more challenging, and, in that case, additional protection may be required. Also, tools specific to the type of substrate and burial depth will be used to ensure sound and safe cable burial.*

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

At the meeting on March 31, WHOI researchers presented the draft economic assessment for the South Fork Wind farm. Findings and proposed results prompted a series of follow-up questions and comments which were addressed or incorporated in the report. These changes and updates were presented by Hauke and Jin.

*Dan McKiernan (DMF) indicated that the original data inputs did not accurately account for the lobster fishery as these vessels are not required to submit VTR although some vessels do submit a monthly trip report with statistical area information and some submit VTR. Combining the available data sets provides a more comprehensive portrayal of the state of the fishery for this report. He also noted that most for-hire and charter boats do not provide VTR. To better assess for-hire and charter fishing in the project area, DMF held informal meetings with those who operate at Cox’s Ledge. The input from the operators and a survey to party/charter permit holders provided a second dataset that the researchers included in the impact assessment. Both these datasets substantially improved the accuracy of the economic analysis.*

### **South Fork Wind Mitigation Package (Melanie Gearon)**

Undersecretary Beth Card described that the administration was reviewing a proposed mitigation package based on the South Fork Wind economic impact assessment. This review would be informed by the revised information coming out of the economic analysis by Ørsted.

Melanie Gearon (Ørsted) explained that the mitigation framework had two parts ([see presentation](#)):

- 1) Commercial and for hire fisheries compensation fund (\$1.5 million based on the WHOI assessment + \$551,000 contingency). This would provide compensation for direct economic loss due to construction, operation, and decommissioning. The fund would be managed by a third party.

- 2) Coastal Community Fund (\$500,000). Provides grants to improve coastal communities impacted by the proposed project, e.g., marketing for local fisheries, enhancing the fishing industry (technology), and technology to reduce gear conflict with offshore wind. A panel representing fishing industry and state agencies will be formed to oversee disbursement of funds. \$1 million will be added to this fund as part of Revolution Wind and Sunrise Wind projects.

*Question: Will the panel who oversees distribution of finding be independent? Who will it include?*

*Response: Yes, Ørsted will not be included in the distribution of funds. Exact membership is still being discussed, but it will be advised by fishing communities.*

*Question: Is the fund quoted per year or for the duration of the project? When will the funds be placed in the fund account (in year 1 or each year?)*

*Response: The exact mechanism is still being developed. Ideally funds will be available upfront to be able to support fisheries. Amount quoted is for the life of the project.*

*Question: Will these amounts be combined with other funds from other projects?*

*Response: This has not been decided yet.*

*Dan McKiernan (DMF) indicated his appreciation to developers to include scouting boats and for their efforts to coordinate closely with the different fisheries. He asked whether fisheries will be excluded from the area of construction while work was going on, and who will be responsible for setting the small-scale closure? Ed le Blanc explained they will work with the U.S. Coast Guard to create a small (500 yd diameter) safety zone enforceable when there is work taking place in the area.*

### **Responsible Offshore Science Alliance Update (Mike Pol, Division of Marine Fisheries)**

Mike Pol announced a meeting of the advisory committee on June 17. Meeting is open to the public. The agenda includes discussion on the incorporation of fisheries knowledge into offshore wind panning, and setting up a panel on standardization of services/

### **Other Announcements/Updates/Next Meeting**

Lisa wrapped up the meeting by thanking attendees.

#### **Action items:**

- Additional feedback on the economic analysis to be sent to Lisa Engler ([Lisa.Engler@mass.gov](mailto:Lisa.Engler@mass.gov)) or to Dan McKiernan ([Dan.McKiernan@mass.gov](mailto:Dan.McKiernan@mass.gov)) by Friday.
- Attendees to provide input to the Ørsted team on the Economic Impact Assessment by June 18.
- The next meeting will be scheduled in September. Agenda will include an update from ROSA.

- Recommendation for future discussion topics:
  - Decommissioning: what it means, timelines, developer plans
  - Selection of burial depth: what is factored in, and other related information

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 PM.