

Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Webinar Summary

October 29, 2014 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Summary of Participant Input

On October 29, 2014, the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body (MidA RPB) convened its second public webinar, entitled *Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Webinar: Review of Draft MidA RPB Documents*. The webinar featured a series of brief presentations focused on MidA RPB documents recently released to the public, including *Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan Options*, *Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Interim Plan for Stakeholder Engagement*, and *Status of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Assessment*. During the latter half of the webinar, members of the public were offered the opportunity to comment and pose questions through an online question and answer (Q&A) function. This document summarizes the most common themes of comments and questions offered by participants, as well as responses offered by members of the MidA RPB. Additional information, including a full recording and transcript, a participant list, and a listing of all questions posed over Q&A, can be found at the MidA RPB website.¹

Webinar participants

Approximately 59 participants logged into the webinar.² Based on webinar registration, the following sectors appear to have been represented, among others:

- Commercial Fishing
- Recreational Fishing
- Renewable Energy
- Shipping
- Science/ Academia
- Environmental advocacy organizations
- Communication industry
- Defense
- Federal Agencies
- State Governments

¹ <http://www.boem.gov/Environmental-Stewardship/Mid-Atlantic-Regional-Planning-Body/index.aspx>

² An exact participant count is not possible. Webinar organizers are aware that some participants gathered in groups around shared computers.

Summary of comments and questions

During the webinar, participants asked questions and offered comments about the following topics:

General Comments and Questions about the MidA RPB

- A question was posed asking why public comments are requested by November 20, 2014 when the next in-person RPB meeting is not scheduled until January 20, 2015. The response was that RPB members will need time to review the comments and consider them in developing the next iteration of documents that will be discussed at the January meeting.

Regional Ocean Action Plan Options

- Further clarity was sought about the graphic entitled “Relative Practicality of Options” that appears in the *Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan Options* document. A specific question was posed about whether Options C and D might also prove difficult in the context of consensus building and the political climate. RPB members responded that all of the options are would create issues related to consensus and politics, and that this graphic was intended to demonstrate the MidA RPB’s assessment of relative difficulty.
- Comments were offered expressing appreciation that the MidA RPB would consider hybrid options that combine favored elements of the different options presented.
- A question was posed seeking further clarity on what led the MidA RPB to consider Options A and E impractical. RPB members responded that Option A would not represent a significant change from the status quo, and it would be hard to come to consensus on the “optimal uses” described in Option E, among other challenges.
- Further clarity was also requested on whether Options A and E were still under consideration by the MidA RPB and whether changing part of the wording on Option E could render it more feasible. RPB members explained that they decided to share all five options with the public to demonstrate the range of ideas considered, but they are focusing on the middle three options at this time. They also emphasized that they would consider hybrid options that combine different elements of the options presented.
- A question was posed asking to compare and contrast the Mid-Atlantic RPB activities and trajectory with the Northeast RPB process. RPB members discussed the similarities and differences. One major difference cited is that the two RPBs are in different stages of developing a plan and are employing different strategies to initiate plan design and development.

Stakeholder Engagement

- A question was posed about whether the MidA would consider holding a stakeholder workshop to work through these options similar to the workshop the Northeast RPB held in New Hampshire on October 21, 2014. The response was that the MidA RPB will discuss the possibility of such a workshop.

Data Portal

- A question was posed asking how the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal interacts with the Mid-Atlantic Regional Association Coastal Ocean Observing System (MARACOOS) data portal. Members of the Portal Team responded that the teams managing each tool are collaborating.

Regional Ocean Assessment

- Further clarity was requested about how a Regional Ocean Assessment will be used. MidA RPB members indicated that it will be used to inform RPB activities and that it will be important to develop metrics to help evaluate whether the RPB is reaching its goals.