

# Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) Central Atlantic Renewable Energy Planning Area Development Recreational Fishing Stakeholder Meeting

January 5, 2022, 5PM- 7PM via Zoom

## Meeting Summary

*This meeting summary is not intended to be a complete transcript or record of the meeting proceedings but rather serves to capture the high-level themes and issues discussed. 95 attendees were present. The presentation shown during the meeting can be found on the project website: <https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/state-activities/central-atlantic-activities>*

## Meeting Purpose

- Provide information and answer questions about the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) leasing process and the proposed Central Atlantic Renewable Energy Planning Area for offshore wind development off the coast of Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina.
- Gather broad feedback and input from recreational fishing stakeholder on the initial draft Central Atlantic Renewable Energy Planning Area.

## Welcome and Introductions

Jim Bennett, Program Manager for Renewable Energy Programs at BOEM, welcomed participants and provided an overview of the agency's responsibilities. He discussed the meeting purpose and the agency's interest in obtaining input as part of the draft Central Atlantic Renewable Energy Planning Area identification, discussing ocean uses and biological and physical resources within the draft planning area, and discussing collaboration opportunities between BOEM and the fishing industry.

Mr. Bennett emphasized the agency's commitment to increased transparency and collaboration with stakeholders and attempt to identify potential impacts and avoid conflicts through engagement with stakeholders early in process. He shared that BOEM has adopted a regional approach to stakeholder engagement and will gather input from stakeholders and the public several times throughout the process. In closing, he explained that BOEM believes offshore wind can successfully co-exist with the maritime industry and reiterated the agency's commitment to engaging with the maritime industry throughout the process.

Patrick Field, a facilitator with the Consensus Building Institute, welcomed attendees, thanked them for their participation, and provided an overview of the meeting agenda.

## Presentations

## Overview of the Renewable Energy Development Process and Draft Central Atlantic Planning Area

Bridgette Duplantis, Program Analyst at BOEM, introduced the Central Atlantic Planning Area which is located more than 20 miles off the Atlantic Coast. She provided an overview of BOEM's four stage renewable energy leasing and areas identification process. She explained that the Central Atlantic Planning Area process is early in the Planning and Analysis phase and that the planning area will be winnowed down into a Call Area and subsequent Lease Areas later in the process. She discussed BOEM's stakeholder and public outreach activities associated with the project which will include a Central Atlantic Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force Meeting on February 16, 2022. Ms. Duplantis explained that the original draft Planning Area has already been winnowed down to Planning Areas 1, 2, and 3 to avoid conflicts with existing uses and impacts to biological resources, particularly those near Atlantic Canyons and the Outer Continental Shelf break, a NASA Danger Zone, and USCG proposed shipping safety fairways that overlap with the draft planning area.

The presentation continued with maps showing various types of recreational fishing data overlaid over the draft planning area. The key points of data discussed were fishing and caution areas from the Atlantic Coast Fishing Atlas; Atlantic Fishing Revenue Intensity from 2007 to 2012; and NOAA comments in terms of fishing species in Area 3 of the planning area.

Ms. Duplantis concluded the presentation with an overview of process milestones and next steps.

## Discussion

Patrick Field invited members of the recreational fishing industry to share their comments and questions. Generally, there is a concern from the members of this group about access. Key points and themes of the discussion are recorded below.

### Transit, Location, and Access

- Many of the fishermen had concerns over the spatial aspect of the wind farms, noting that recreational fishermen are out for long hours and often pass through the current and planned lease areas.
- Several fishermen based out of Ocean City, Maryland shared concerns about vessel transit through Area 3.
- Attendees wanted to know about the actual spacing parameters of each possible project. Attendees want to be able to see the information as soon as the construction operations plans are available.
- Attendees raised concerns about the lack of baseline data across the planning area and noted that several key fishing areas were not represented in the maps shown during the presentation including recreational fishing areas on the coastal side of Area 3. BOEM staff asked attendees who have that information to send it to the project team so that they could consider that data in their decision making.
- An attendee suggested looking at the Large Pelagic Survey, which is conducted from

Virginia north, and collects Lat/Long data on recreational fishing trips targeting species such as tuna, billfish, swordfish, and pelagic sharks.

- Several attendees expressed interest in proper maintenance of lighting in those areas as well as being able to traverse without restriction.
- One participant highlighted that productivity seemed to drop in the UK in fishing areas like Areas 1 and 2 of the planning area and expressed concern the same could happen in these waters.

#### Infrastructure

- Several attendees had concerns about the cabling from the wind farms to onshore areas. Attendees want to be updated as to where those facilities are when the wind energy areas are developed. Also, others mentioned wanting to know about jobs and where the materials are for construction. A couple members of the BOEM team highlighted those onshore facilities tend to be places that have the infrastructure capable to handle projects like (i.e., such as ports with extensive existing infrastructure like in the Hampton Roads area).
- There was a concern to make sure that the turbines are hurricane rated given that this is “hurricane alley” and would want to see BOEM create a map of hurricane tracks overlaid with the proposed wind areas.
- A few participants asked to know about the process of turbine removal. David MacDuffee shared the general process. Most leases have a 33-year operation terms which includes construction. A developer can request a renewal which could be extended. If the turbine runs its life cycle and not renewed, the developer will pay to decommission and return the sea floor to what it was before. The developer must prepare a decommissioning plan which would be reviewed by BOEM before moving forward. There are financial instruments for these turbines so that in the case of decommissioning the government would still have the ability to fully decommission the facility if the developer was not financially able to do so.

#### Ecosystem

- An attendee asked if there has been an environmental impact study completed for the survey, construction and ongoing operations of these wind farms and how can one obtain such a study. BOEM members noted that there is an extensive environmental review later in the planning process once detailed construction and operations plan is submitted that has sufficient detail for review. BOEM members shared where attendees could find a technology assessment<sup>i</sup> and two other environmental impact statements released for other projects<sup>ii</sup>.
- There were concerns regarding how the acoustics and vibrations would affect fish behavior. BOEM members shared links to completed and in progress reports and studies related to the impacts of acoustics and vibrations on fish<sup>iiiiv</sup>.
- Questions were raised about how BOEM would ensure a wind farm is not placed on benthic species. Members of BOEM team discussed the extensive environmental review process that takes place before development.

## Communication and Coordination with State and Federal Agencies

- Attendees were concerned about the communication from BOEM regarding the planning area and feeling that they are often left out of the loop on these conversations.
- A few attendees mentioned that they did not know about this meeting until the day of. Another concern was if there was proper representation on this particular meeting due to the possible communication issues. A suggestion was made to contact HMS permit holders and other e-mail distributions for recreational fishermen to get more people involved in these conversations.
- BOEM highlighted sites to obtain updated information such as the NEFMC/MAFMC website<sup>v</sup> and the BOEM website<sup>vi</sup>.
- Several participants had questions about the leasing process and auction. David MacDuffee, BOEM, provided an overview of the process.
- Ron Larsen invited attendees to reach out to him with direct questions regarding the US Wind Lease at [ronlarsen@searisksolutions.com](mailto:ronlarsen@searisksolutions.com).

## Conclusion

Patrick Field shared that the meeting summary and presentation would be made available to attendees and invited participants to share additional comments via email. He also reminded attendees that a formal public comment period for the project would take place after the task force meeting in February.

Bridgette Duplantis invited participants to send additional comments and information to her e-mail at [Bridgette.duplantis@boem.gov](mailto:Bridgette.duplantis@boem.gov)

Jim Bennet, BOEM, thanked attendees for their time, engagement, and constructive suggestions.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/studies/technology-assessment>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.boem.gov/vineyard-wind>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://epis.boem.gov/final-reports/5361.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.boem.gov/sites/default/files/documents/about-boem/AT-17-02.pdf>

<sup>v</sup> <https://www.mafmc.org/northeast-offshore-wind>

<sup>vi</sup> <https://www.boem.gov/>