



## CENTRAL ATLANTIC 2 OPEN HOUSE MEETINGS SEPTEMBER 17<sup>TH</sup>, 18<sup>TH</sup>, 24<sup>TH</sup>, 25<sup>TH</sup>, AND 26<sup>TH</sup>, 2024 MEETING SUMMARY

*DISCLAIMER: This meeting summary was prepared by the Consensus Building Institute (CBI), a non-profit entity contracted by BOEM to facilitate discussions. This summary is not intended to be a meeting transcript. Rather, it focuses on the main points expressed at the Open House meetings.*

### Meetings in Brief

BOEM convened five in-person Open House meetings in September 2024 to provide information and receive input on the Central Atlantic 2 Call for Information and Nominations (hereafter Call). The meetings were held in the following municipalities: Morehead City, NC; Virginia Beach, VA; Ocean City, MD; Rehoboth Beach, DE; and Atlantic City, NJ. The Open House stations focused on the following topics: Lease Planning Process, Spatial Modeling (staffed by NOAA's National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science), MARCO Data Portal (staffed by the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean [MARCO]), Fisheries, Protected Species, Visual Resources, Cultural Resources, Marine Transport, Technology and Economics, and Power Transmission. Additionally, state agency representatives were invited to host stations at the meetings.

### Discussion

At each meeting, participants were encouraged to ask questions and provide feedback at the various stations found at each Open House meeting. Following each meeting, staff hosting each station provided a brief report-out to a notetaker of key themes and topics discussed at each station. Below is a summary of those key themes and topics.

In addition to this meeting summary, BOEM hosted a Public Comment station at each meeting where participants were able to: (a) type comments directly into a computer connected online to the Central Atlantic 2 Call for Information and Nominations docket on regulations.gov (i.e., BOEM-2024-0040), (b) provide handwritten comments to be later transcribed and uploaded by BOEM to regulations.gov, or (c) provide oral comments via voice recording to be later transcribed and uploaded by BOEM to regulations.gov.

### Morehead City, NC Open House Meeting

On September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024, BOEM convened an Open House meeting at the Crystal Coast Civic Center in Morehead City, NC from 5:00 to 7:30 PM ET. Approximately 37 members of the public attended the meeting. Registration and sign-in were encouraged, but not required to attend the meeting. Attendees' comments and questions are summarized thematically below.

### Visual Impacts

- Participants expressed concerns about potential aesthetic impacts of offshore wind turbines.



### **Wildlife Impacts**

- Participants asked about how offshore wind affects whales.

### **Floating Wind Technology**

- Participants asked about the viability of domestic floating wind technology and expressed interest in further research.

### **Data Utilization and Gaps**

- Participants expressed concerns over a lack of up-to-date fisheries spatial data and encouraged the use of additional data sources to supplement vessel monitoring system (VMS) data.
- Participants asked about how the MARCO data portal and the NCCOS suitability model interact.

### **Transmission**

- A participant expressed concerns with the interaction between cable landings and National Park Service resources.
- Participants asked general questions about harmonic frequencies associated with transmission cables.

### **Economic Impacts**

- Participants asked about costs associated with energy production via offshore wind and general questions about the energy mixes of state utility providers.

### **Virginia Beach, VA Open House Meeting**

On September 18th, 2024, BOEM convened an Open House meeting at the Tidewater Community College Virginia Beach Campus – Student Center from 5:00 to 7:30 PM ET. Approximately 19 members of the public attended the meeting. Registration and sign-in were encouraged, but not required to attend the meeting. Attendees' comments and questions are summarized thematically below.

### **Environmental Justice Considerations**

- A participant asked how BOEM is considering environmental justice in their offshore wind lease planning process.

### **Conflicting Ocean Use**

- Several participants noted ongoing research conducted within the Central Atlantic 2 Call for Information and Nominations Area and encouraged ongoing coordination between the Department of Defense and BOEM.
- A participant noted that there is a specific sand shoal located 7 miles offshore of NASA's Wallops Flight Facility, with interest expressed in ensuring this area is reflected in BOEM's future offshore wind lease planning efforts.
- Participants expressed concerns for aircraft carriers traveling through wind farms.



### **Climate Change and Spatial Modeling**

- Participants asked how climate change is considered in the spatial modeling process and expressed interest in forecasting future ocean activity.

### **Marine Transport**

- Participants discussed increased maritime traffic and emphasized the need for deep anchorage areas for shipping traffic.
- Participants highlighted the lack of anchorages south of Virginia Beach and encouraged BOEM to further consider increased volume of vessels via automatic identification system (AIS) data.

### **Ocean City, MD Open House Meeting**

On September 24th, 2024, BOEM convened an Open House meeting at the Roland E. Powell Convention Center in Ocean City, MD from 5:00 to 7:30 PM ET. Approximately 448 members of the public attended the meeting. Registration and sign-in were encouraged, but not required to attend the meeting. Attendees' comments and questions are summarized thematically below.

### **Visual Impacts**

- A majority of participants expressed concern about potential aesthetic impacts of offshore wind turbines and encouraged BOEM to site future lease areas much further than 3 miles from the coastline, preferably at a distance that would minimize visual sight (20 miles or beyond).
- Participants raised questions about the aviation lights on the turbines and their visibility and frequency in the night sky.

### **Auditory Impacts**

- Participants shared concerns about noise levels during future construction and operation of projects on any future lease areas, including at the lease site, to wildlife and marine life above and below the surface, and at the beach and homes, businesses, and hotels nearby.

### **Economic Impacts**

- Numerous participants expressed concern about potential decreases in property values and negative impacts on the local economy of offshore wind projects adjacent to their communities.

## **Wildlife Impacts**

- Some participants shared that they believe that offshore wind negatively impacts whales. Some further stated that they distrust the reporting and publishing of whale mortalities.
- Participants expressed concern that horseshoe crabs will be negatively affected.
- Participants asked whether species protected under the Endangered Species Act of Marine Mammal Protection Act are the only ones being considered in this process.
- Participants asked questions about whether underwater transmission cables will impact migration of marine life, including whales and birds.
- Participants were curious about acoustic monitoring and survey technology impacts on wildlife.
- Some participants expressed concern about oil leaks from turbines, boats, and other wind infrastructure and its effects on marine life.

## **Transmission**

- Participants asked about electromagnetic fields (EMF), the size and scale of cable landings, and where the location of transmission cables might be.

## **Fisheries**

- Participants expressed concern about the extent to which commercial, recreational, and private fisheries are being considered and included in the process.
- Participants also shared concerns that the data being used is outdated.
- Participants were curious about what the limits would be to fishing in offshore wind lease areas.
- Participants expressed concern that construction and operations of offshore wind projects would negatively affect the fishing industry.
- Some participants expressed concern that offshore wind projects will take up dock space in key ports that otherwise could be used by fishermen and others.

## **Planning Process**

- Participants asked about the drivers of this lease planning process.
- Participants generally expressed lack of clarity about whether the Call Area was the planned area for new leases, which leases would be developed at what time, and about existing lease areas versus this new planning process for additional lease areas.



## **Recreation**

- Participants expressed concern about Maryland’s ability to host annual events such as the fishing tournaments and air shows, and concern that recreational activities (i.e. boating) will become less safe.

## **Search and Rescue**

- Participants expressed concern that offshore wind turbines would affect the United States Coast Guard’s ability to conduct proper search and rescue operations.

## **National Security**

- Participants expressed concerns about the terrorism risk of these remote, offshore facilities.

## **Marine Transport**

- Participants asked whether turbines would affect vessels’ radar capabilities, thus threatening navigational safety.

## **Rehoboth Beach, DE Meeting**

On September 25th, 2024, BOEM convened an Open House meeting at the Fairfield Inn and Suites Rehoboth Beach in Rehoboth Beach, DE from 5:00 to 7:30 PM ET. Approximately 34 people attended the meeting. Registration and sign-in were encouraged, but not required to attend the meeting. Attendees’ comments and questions are summarized thematically below.

## **Wildlife Impacts**

- Participants encouraged further collaboration between BOEM and NOAA to address wildlife impact concerns.
- Participants expressed concerns about the impact of wind turbines on horseshoe crabs.
- Participants asked about the impact of acoustics on whales.

## **Visual Impacts**

- Participants expressed concerns about the aesthetic impacts of offshore wind turbines and encouraged BOEM to site future lease areas much further than 3 miles from the coastline, preferably at a distance that would minimize visual sight (20 miles or beyond).
- Participants requested visual simulations specific to this region and from key vantage points as early in the process as possible.



## **Transmission**

- Participants asked about electromagnetic fields (EMF), the size and scale of cable landings, and where the location of transmission cables might be.

## **Offshore Wind and Ocean Use**

- A participant inquired about potential effects of wind turbines on surfing conditions, particularly regarding wave frequency and size.

## **Fisheries**

- Several participants were concerned with the potential displacement of fishing ports and were skeptical that fishing would be allowed in wind farm areas.
- Participants urged compensation for fisheries and noted that the construction phase of the process would impact fishing activity as well as on-going operations.

## **Planning Process**

- Participants were concerned about establishing the Central Atlantic 2 Call Area before gathering more data.
- Participants were generally appreciative of the format of the Open House meeting.
- Participants asked about how historical sites and shipwreck locations are considered in the lease planning process.

## **Atlantic City, NJ Meeting**

On September 26th, 2024, BOEM convened an Open House meeting at the Stockton University, Atlantic City Campus – Fannie Lou Hamer Event Room in Atlantic City, NJ from 5:00 to 7:30 PM ET. Approximately 33 people attended the meeting. Registration and sign-in were encouraged, but not required to attend the meeting. Attendees' comments and questions are summarized thematically below.

## **Transmission**

- Participants asked about electromagnetic fields (EMF), the size and scale of cable landings, and where the location of transmission cables might be.

## **Planning Process**

- Participants asked how the State of New Jersey and BOEM coordinate and expressed confusion over the timeline of the Central Atlantic 2 offshore wind lease planning process.



### **Visual Impacts**

- Participants expressed concerns about the aesthetic impacts of the turbines and requested more visual simulations of the northern and southern portions of the Central Atlantic 2 Call for Information and Nominations area.

### **Floating Wind Technology**

- Participants asked general questions about floating wind turbine platforms' size and foundation design.

### **Environmental Impacts and Spatial Modeling**

- Participants asked about how adaptive the models are to new information about changing distributions of marine mammals over time.
- One participant asked how modeling addresses uncertainties regarding potential impacts on birds.

### **Wind Turbine Construction Materials**

- Participants were concerned with the construction materials used to create offshore wind turbines, particularly considering the recent blade failure in New England.

### **Marine Transport**

- One participant highlighted high levels of traffic in maritime fairways as an important consideration for the Central Atlantic 2 lease planning process.

### **Fisheries**

- Participants expressed skepticism about job creation compared to potential job losses in the fishing industry.
- A participant asked about the potential of aquaculture within wind farms and how this could impact fish consumed by people.