Scoping Summary Report for the South Fork Wind Farm Environmental Impact Statement

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PREPARED FOR

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CONTENTS

Appendices

Tables

1 INTRODUCTION

The following is a summary of public comments received by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) regarding the South Fork Wind Farm and the South Fork Export Cable, hereafter referred to as the Project or Proposed Action.

On June 29, 2018, Deepwater Wind South Fork, LLC (DWSF) submitted a Construction and Operations Plan (COP) to BOEM seeking approval to construct and operate the Project, a proposed wind energy facility located approximately 19 miles southeast of Block Island, Rhode Island, and 35 miles east of Montauk Point, New York. On October 19, 2018, BOEM issued a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) consistent with the regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA; 42 United States Code [USC] 4321 et seq.) to assess the potential impacts of the Proposed Action and alternatives (83 *Federal Register* 53104).

The NOI initiated a public scoping process which solicited input from federal agencies, tribes, state and local governments, and the general public regarding potential significant resources and issues, impact-producing factors, reasonable alternatives (e.g., size, geographic, seasonal, or other restrictions on construction and siting of facilities and activities), and potential mitigation measures to be analyzed in the EIS, as well as additional sources of information for consideration. The public scoping period occurred from October 19 through November 19, 2018.

2 OBJECTIVE

The goals of this scoping report are to

- ensure that every comment is considered,
- identify the concerns raised by all respondents,
- represent the breadth and depth of the public's viewpoints and concerns as fairly as possible, and
- present public concerns in such a way as to facilitate BOEM's consideration of comments.

Although this summary attempts to capture the full range of public issues and concerns, they should be considered with caution. Because respondents are self-selected, their comments may not necessarily represent the sentiments of the public as a whole. This analysis attempts to provide a fair representation of the wide range of views submitted, but it does not attempt to treat input as if it were a vote or a statistical sample. In addition, many of the respondents' reasons for voicing these viewpoints are varied, subtle, or detailed. In an effort to provide a succinct summary of concerns raised, many subtleties are not conveyed in this summary.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Terminology

The following terminology is used throughout this report.

- **Submission:** The entire content submitted by a single person or group at a single time. For example, a 1-page letter from a citizen; an e-mail with a portable document format (PDF) attachment; or a transcript of a public scoping meeting was considered to be a single submission.
- **Comment:** A specific statement within a submission that expresses a sender's specific point of view, concern, question, or suggestion. One submission may contain many comments.

- **Substantive Comment:** Scoping submissions were reviewed to identify and categorize "substantive" comments. To be substantive, a comment must meet both of the following criteria:
  - **Related to the Proposed Project:** To be substantive, a comment must first relate, even tangentially, to the proposed Project, its connected actions, cumulative actions/effects, and other reasonably foreseeable actions, impacts, or conditions.
  - **More than Simple Opinion:** This criterion requires that substantive comments provide information to help BOEM prepare the EIS by providing some level of support or basis for the commenter's position, or some indication of the issues the commenter believes are significant. As a hypothetical example, a statement that "BOEM should reject the Project" would not be considered substantive, but a statement that "The Project should not be approved because it would harm commercial fisheries" would be considered substantive.

3.2 Comment Submittal

BOEM received submissions during the public scoping period via the following mechanisms:

- Electronic submissions received via Regulations.gov on docket number BOEM-2018-0010;
- Hard-copy comment letters submitted to BOEM via traditional mail;
- Hard-copy comment cards and/or letters received during each of three public scoping meetings;
- Emails submitted to BOEM; and
- Comments submitted verbally at each of the three public scoping meetings.

Three public scoping meetings were held at the following locations and dates as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Public Scoping Meetings

Date	Time	Location
November 5, 2018	Open House 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Presentation and Q&A 6:00 p.m.	American Legion Post 419 15 Montauk Highway Amagansett, NY 11930
November 7, 2018	Open House 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Presentation and Q&A 6:00 p.m.	UMass Dartmouth SMAST East 836 South Rodney French Blvd Room 101-103 New Bedford, MA 02747
November 8, 2018	Open House 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Presentation and Q&A 6:00 p.m..	Narragansett Community Center 53 Mumford Road Narragansett, RI 02882

Q&A = questions and answers

3.3 Comment Processing

Compilation of Submissions

BOEM downloaded and reviewed all submissions from Regulations.gov. These submissions were provided in Hypertext Markup Language (html) format, while attachments provided by stakeholders as part of their Regulations.gov submission were typically provided in PDF or Microsoft Word format. E-mails and hard copy letters sent to BOEM were scanned as PDFs, as were hard copy comment cards and letters provided during scoping meetings. A PDF version of each meeting transcript was also provided by court reporters to BOEM.

All submissions were tracked in a single Microsoft Excel file that served as the comment analysis database. Each submission entered into the database received a unique identification (ID) number. The database also included the submitter's contact information. Appendix A provides a detailed listing of all the submissions received.

Identification of Comments

Each submission was read to identify substantive comments (as defined in Section 3.1). Each substantive comment was entered into the comment analysis database with a unique comment ID number. Each substantive comment was also subsequently assigned to at least one NEPA resource or topic area, with some comments assigned to more than one resource or NEPA topic area.

4 SCOPING SUBMISSION AND COMMENT SUMMARY

4.1 Submissions

BOEM received 119 submissions during the scoping period from the public, agencies, and other interested groups and stakeholders, of which five were determined to be exact duplicates (same sender and same content) of other submissions, for a net of 114 unique submissions. Two additional letters were received later during preliminary draft EIS development. Table 2 shows the types of submissions received.

Table 2. Distribution of Submissions by Type

Submission Type	Number Received
Regulations.gov submission	95
Mailed hard copy	6
Public meeting comment card	10
E-mail to BOEM representative*	7
Letter submitted at public meeting	3
Total	**121**

* Includes two additional letters submitted after the scoping period ended.

The totals above include the following submissions by federal, state, and local government entities:

- Two non-duplicate submissions from federal agencies: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).
- Four non-duplicate submissions from state agencies or representatives: New York Department of Environmental Conservation (NYDEC), New York Department of State (NYDOS), New York State Energy Research and Development and Authority (NYSERDA), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Division of Marine Fisheries; New England Fishery Management Council; and Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM).
- Three non-duplicate submissions from local governments: The Trustees of the Freeholders and Commonalty of the Town of East Hampton, Town of East Hampton, and East Hampton Town Fisheries Committee.

In addition to the federal, state, and local government entities identified above, 9 submissions were received by non-governmental organizations; all remaining submissions were received from the public.

Submissions were reviewed to determine the overall disposition of the provider toward the proposed Project. Based on this review, dispositions of the 116 unique submissions were as follows:

- Pro (generally in favor of the proposed Project): 3 (2%)
- Con (generally opposed to the proposed Project): 10 (9%)
- Con (specifically opposed to the cable landing at Beach Lane): 67 (58%)
- Neutral (no distinct disposition, or disposition could not be clearly determined): 36 (31%)

A form letter containing pre-written text from Save the Beach Lane, requesting selection of an alternative landing site, was included as part of one submission; the form letter consisted of more than 900 signatures.

4.2 Comments

A total of 703 substantive comments were identified. Table 3 shows the distribution of comments by resource and NEPA topic (note that because some comments were associated with multiple resources, the number in the Comments column exceeds total). The most commonly addressed resources or NEPA topics included Commercial Fisheries and Recreational Fishing; Finfish, Invertebrates, and Essential Fish Habitat; NEPA Process; Socioeconomics; and Alternatives.

Table 3. Distribution of Comments by Resource Addressed

Resource	Comments
Air Quality	24
Alternatives (General, range of alternatives)	34
Alternatives (Beach Lane Landing)	78
Benthic Habitat	9
Birds and Bats	54
Biology or Multiple Resources (General)	21
Commercial Fisheries and Recreational Fishing	87
Cultural, Historical, and Archeological Resources	1
Cumulative Impacts	20
Finfish, Invertebrates, and Essential Fish Habitat (including general marine species comments)	67
Land Use and Coastal Infrastructure	19
Marine Mammals	34
Mitigation	22
Navigation and Vessel Traffic	8
NEPA Process and Public Engagement	59
Other Resources and Uses (Marine Minerals, Military, Aviation, Offshore Energy, other Noise, etc.)	2
Project Description	32
Public Infrastructure and Services	6
Purpose and Need	13
Recreation and Tourism	10

Resource	Comments
Sea Turtles	5
Other Socioeconomics (including general noise and EMF issues)	80
Terrestrial Plants and Animals (including general wildlife comments)	23
Visual Impact	5
Water Quality	20
Wetlands	2

4.3 Definition of Resource Areas and Common NEPA Topics Raised

The following sections define and summarize each of the resource areas or NEPA topics addressed in the comments. Comments have been summarized, as appropriate, particularly for concerns that were raised by several commenters.

Air Quality

Comments related to air quality encompassed topics such as analysis of air quality emissions, climate change, the carbon footprint, and alternative energy. While some comments supported offshore wind energy as a means of meeting climate and renewable energy goals, other submitters expressed concern that the proposed Project could alter local climate conditions or lead to greater carbon emissions than anticipated, due to emissions associated with material transport and construction activities. Many of these comments also indicated that the EIS should clearly disclose how the proposed Project will reduce power generation emissions in the region (see also, Purpose and Need).

Other comments included:

- A request for ambient air quality data and thorough air analysis, including air pollutant emissions associated with all phases of the construction and operation of the Project and impacts associated with climate change.
- Documented compliance with all state and federal air quality regulations, including how the proposed Project complies with state greenhouse gas reduction goals.
- Support for additional alternatives or environmental protection measures, such as anti-idling practices and retrofitting older equipment and vessels with the best available control technologies, to further minimize impacts.

Alternatives

Alternatives comments identified a need to consider the No Action Alternative and a full range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed Project that balance energy generation and environmental impacts. More specifically, comments asked that BOEM consider alternatives including, but not limited to, the following:

- Alternative locations within the lease area that would minimize impacts to sensitive habitats and other marine resources and uses, with particular focus on siting outside of Cox Ledge.

- A robust range of alternatives related to turbine location, spacing and arrangement to minimize environmental or fishing operations and transit impacts, including options for 1 nautical mile-spaced grid pattern or greater than 1-mile spacing.
- Minimizing the number of turbines/maximizing power output of individual turbines.
- Adding suction buckets as a foundation option.
- Reducing the permitted operating life of the facility.
- Using the Long Island Power Authority's (LIPA) 138 kilovolt land-based transmission cable project or the East End - Battery large scale facility to meet energy demand.
- Alternatives to cable landing site options. In particular, many comments expressed opposition to the Beach Lane landing site alternative due to varied social, economic, and environmental impacts. An additional comment by the Citizens for the Preservation of Wainscott, Inc. also proposed an alternative landing site at Atlantic Avenue.
- New technologies for generation such as floating turbines.
- Alternatives to cable routes that minimized impacts to sensitive biotic/benthic habitats.
- Alternatives for cable construction methods and protection (e.g., natural materials vs. artificial materials), including using smaller cable, burying the cable deeper, alternatives to side-casting spoils, route alternatives that allow for full cable burial, and using better shielding materials.
- Alternatives to cofferdam excavation.
- Alternatives to cable decommissioning that remove all cables, etc. rather than decommissioning buried cables in-place.
- Consideration of Responsible Offshore Development Association (RODA)'s layout proposal implementing designated transit lanes, each at least 4 nm wide, where no surface occupancy would occur.

Benthic Habitat

Benthic habitat comments requested that the EIS provide a discussion of existing benthic and shellfish resources, as well as disclose anticipated impacts to the benthic community, such as excavation, side-casting, scouring, and sediment dispersal, from proposed Project construction and operation. Specific analysis recommendations included:

- Consideration of impacts to benthic species and egg and larval survival based on proposed intensity and timing of activities.
- Development of comprehensive habitat maps to display information about geoforms, bathymetry, substrate type, and biotic features, as well as the types and locations of benthic resources vulnerable to the adverse effects of wind farm construction and operation.
- Analysis of turbine or cable installation impacts to hard bottom habitat in Cox Ledge and minimization/mitigation measures that would be used to reduce impacts to these habitats.
- Analysis of impacts associated with habitat conversion (e.g., soft sediments to hard bottom/artificial reef habitat) from turbine installation, including an evaluation of impacts to higher trophic levels due to the loss of prey species.
- Belief that proposed turbines will act as artificial reefs once constructed and provide new marine habitat.
- Analysis of proposed Project changes to charter boat fishing (specifically switching from drifting to anchoring) and potential benthic impact.

Birds and Bats

Avian and bat comments covered individual species analysis, collision and displacement, as well as proposed mitigation measures. Topics identified for analysis included existing seasonal distribution, aggregation, abundance, and migration routes; sonar and echolocation for bats; sea duck abundance; behavior and physiological impacts from aviation lighting; proposed Project interference with known migratory pathways, flyways, and overwintering sites; turbine and avian/bat interactions; and potential changes to important coastal habitats.

Comments identified new findings in recent Block Island Wind Farm post-construction reports and scientific publications to be considered during analysis of listed avian species, including roseate terns, piping plovers, and rufa red knots. These comments similarly recommended adoption of American Bird Conservancy's Bird-Smart Wind Energy Policy to reduce and redress any unavoidable bird mortality and habitat loss from wind energy development.

More specifically, comments stated that the EIS should:

- Consider the full range of potential impacts on all bird species known to forage and rest in or near the Project area, or to migrate through the area, including those species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and federal and state-listed species.
- Disclose how take will be avoided or minimized, from collisions, habitat displacement/loss, and cumulative impacts. Comments recommended that BOEM continue to implement its Migratory Bird Treaty Act responsibilities with explicit recognition that incidental take is prohibited.
- Incorporate monitoring plan information, as well as implement adaptive management and the following mitigation measures:
    - Full operational curtailment of the wind turbines during the piping plover migratory period and the roseate tern post breeding season (15 July–15 August), as well as the rufa red knot migratory period (25 October–21 November), and additionally during low visibility conditions.
    - Implementation of detection and curtailment systems for large flocks and bird species (e.g., kittiwakes and gannets) protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.
    - Development of mitigation and compensation actions for breeding, winter, and non-breeding roost sites. For example, establishment of protected areas, predator control, and habitat restoration (as has recently occurred at Bird Island in Marion, Massachusetts, Buzzards Bay, one of the largest breeding colonies of roseate tern).
    - Limiting tower height to reduce impact to migrating passerine birds which travel the Atlantic Flyway nocturnally.
    - Avoidance of turbine construction in the northernmost blocks of the Lease Area (6764–6766, 6815–6817, 6865–6867, 6914–6919 because this region is situated within key foraging roseate tern routes (between Block Island, Rhode Island; Noman's Land, Massachusetts; and Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts).
- Analyze impacts to dune and beach habitat for species (e.g., least terns, piping plover, seabeach knotweed, and seabeach amaranth).

Bat comments stated that the EIS should disclose northern long-eared bat (NLEB) activity within the Project area, since portions of the cable corridor, the Hither Hills landing site, and Cove Hollow Road interconnection facility site are within, or in close vicinity to, occupied habitat for NLEB. Comments similarly indicated that the EIS should analyze NLEB impacts from the proposed Project, including tree clearing during construction activities, and assess suitable conservation measures. It was stated that winter tree clearing may not be an effective avoidance measure on Long Island.

Biological Resources – General

Comments identified a range of potential Project impacts to biological resources in the Project area that should be considered during EIS preparation. These topics included potential behavioral and physiological impacts from noise, altered water quality, foundation lighting, habitat alteration, and electromagnetic/magnetic fields. Comments stated that the EIS should identify measures that minimize individual and population-level impacts to biological resources, such as routing to avoid sensitive habitat areas; attenuation or elimination of baseline electromagnetic fields (EMF) effects, noise, and vibration; and seasonal construction windows (e.g., time-of-year and time-of-day) and operational restrictions (e.g., cut-in wind speeds). Commenters expressed concerns to habitats and opposition due to potential impacts to the natural environment, as well as requests for the EIS to consider direct, indirect, and cumulative Project impacts to habitat alteration and fragmentation across coastal ecosystems (inshore, intertidal, and terrestrial zones). Many of these comments are further addressed below, by specific resource topic. Comments also indicated that the EIS should acknowledge uncertainties regarding the influence of climate change on coastal and marine species and habitats when considering potential Project impacts.

Commercial Fisheries and For-Hire Recreational Fishing

Comments related to commercial and for-hire recreational fishing indicated that the EIS must fully disclose existing conditions and proposed Project direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts to the local commercial fishing industry and the effect it will have on the local economy, based on duration and timing of construction and decommissioning activities. Comments requested a complete catalog of East Hampton fish species, as well as a current assessment of managed species, their status, and habitat requirements; landings and value of landings; fishery participants including vessels, gear types, and ports; and potential impacts beyond the vessel owner level (processors, distributors, etc.) within the Project area and adjacent areas.

Other recommended areas of analysis included:

- Potential safety concerns and emergency response plans for turbine-boating interactions.
- How the turbine placement and spacing will affect transit and ability to fish within the wind farm, including the ability for vessels to maintain maneuverability and minimize risk of fouling gear with other gear or with the turbines.
- Discussion of mechanisms by which fishing could be temporarily or permanently restricted, leading to displacement of fishing activities and resulting in increased fishing pressure in other locations. It was stated that the EIS should:
    - Assess alternatives that include the impact of no mobile gear fishing in the Project area.
    - Evaluate potential non-market social impacts and costs associated with reduced fishing revenues as a result of short-or long-term effort displacement, impacts on catch rates, changes to species composition, potential impacts of construction activity on spawning success and future recruitment, and permanent or short-term changes to essential fish habitat (EFH) during construction, operation, and decommissioning the Project.
- Analysis of cable and landing impacts to the inshore/nearshore fishery, with particular focus on impacts to 1) the baitfish and dory fishery, and 2) Georgica Pond, a coastal lagoon that supports commercial landings of blue claw crab, white perch, American eel, Atlantic silversides, and river herring.
- Use of updated, more comprehensive data, including 1) joining VTR and dealer data to get area-specific landings and revenue data, 2) site-specific analysis of VMS data for more recent years (i.e., 2016–2018), and 3) VTR data through 2017, as well as recognition of any data limitations.

- A complete economic analysis of commercial fishing landings within the lease and Project area and income generated from those landings using the methodology of Rhode Island's Department of Environmental Management Department of Marine Fisheries report *Spatiotemporal and Economic Analysis of Vessel Monitoring System Data within Wind Energy Areas in the Greater North Atlantic Addendum I*, specifically utilizing the years 2000–2016, as well as the Kirkpatrick (2017) report. However, it was also noted that the EIS should:
  - Avoid mischaracterizing the importance of operations within the lease area by placing too much emphasis on averages and landings/revenues as a proportion of total regional output.
  - Avoid mischaracterizing impacts to communities that are more reliant upon operations within the lease area by placing too much emphasis on absolute revenues.
  - Review and properly characterize landings by FMP.
  - Recognize limitations of the use of Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) trawl survey data for species abundance.
- Analysis of a range of economic losses of fishing grounds to trawl and scallop fishermen due to unexpected increases in cable armoring by concrete matting, concrete bags, or rock along the cable route.
- Impacts of potential gear loss from platforms, turbines, and undersea equipment including power and support cables, conduits, and anchoring devices/equipment.
- Species/habitat/ecosystem impacts, including EMF (see additional comments below).
- Navigational risk, including hazards to sea and air navigation presented by above-surface and sub-surface structures and equipment (see additional comments below).
- Analysis of recreational fisheries impacts, including site fidelity and movement of fish that are targeted as part of recreational businesses.

A variety of mitigation measures were also proposed to address impacts to fisheries, including:

- Consideration of a range of cable burial depths to address potential for anchor strikes from tug/barge and fishing vessels.
- Annual cash donation to the fisheries.
- Alternatives to transit lanes, simulators, specific lighting schemes, and turbine spacing, as well as mechanisms for improved communication, including providing real-time construction information on systems fishermen are actively using, and "one-stop shopping" for reporting wind farm emergencies such as oil spills and interactions with fishing gear, such as snags.

Cultural, Historical, and Archaeological Resources

Comments indicated that the EIS should assess potential impacts to archaeological and cultural resources at Hither Hills State Park and the potential operation and maintenance (O&M) facility near Montauk Port.

Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative comments indicated that the EIS should consider the impacts of all existing, proposed, or planned energy infrastructure projects in the vicinity of the Project, as well as other activities and events including, but not limited to, sand mining, aquaculture, fisheries management actions, disposal sites, transmission, and the potential for large-scale seismic exploration and offshore oil and gas drilling. Specific topics for consideration during cumulative effects analysis included

- the cumulative impacts of multiple projects on fishing operations, such as changes to time and area fished, gear type used, and fisheries targeted;

- impacts to endangered species;
- the landside effects of noise to residential and commercial buildings near the port facilities; and
- growth-inducing effects from port improvements and the new O&M facility.

Finfish, Invertebrates, and Essential Fish Habitat

Comments related to finfish, invertebrates, and EFH addressed a range of current conditions and analysis requests, as well as measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate for potential Project impacts.

Topics identified for inclusion as part of the existing conditions portion of the EIS included 1) a complete list of affected species; 2) existing ocean habitat, including phytoplankton photosynthetic output, areas of importance for deep water corals, and EMF levels; 3) current stock status for different species; 4) migration routes; 5) life history stages, including egg and larval seasonality and abundance; and 6) seasonal distribution and abundance of species for the Project area.

Topics identified for analysis in the EIS included a range of direct, indirect, and cumulative finfish and invert impacts from construction, pile driving, and vessel traffic. Identified concerns included, but are not limited to, impacts to nearshore and marine spawning activities; impacts on food-fish species and stocks; impact of EMF on specific organisms, in particular flounders, longfin inshore squid, Jonah crab, lobster, little skate, winter skate, Atlantic cod, and dogfish; impact on eggs and larval stages of species, particularly shellfish; light impacts on squid and other light-sensitive species; risk of adverse impacts associated with the management of fouling; potential impacts from accidental release of bentonite during horizontal directional drilling (HDD); and ocean habitat changes, including impacts to the Mid-Atlantic Bight (MAB) Cold Pool. Comments encouraged time of year restrictions or other mitigative measures to minimize impact to marine fisheries resources, along with monitoring plans.

Comments specific to EFH included a request for detailed analysis of the effects of anticipated impacts of construction, operation, and decommissioning on EFH and sensitive life stages. It was stated that the EFH should use best available data sources and science. Specific information identified as necessary for the EFH included:

- Results of acoustic modeling for installation of the proposed turbine foundation types, as well as the extent of area associated with mortality, impairment, and behavioral responses in fish and invertebrates.
- An evaluation of water withdrawals from cable installation using existing ichthyoplankton and zooplankton data to evaluate the expected impacts to sensitive life stages.
- Specific information on the type of dredge material and where and how it will be obtained.
- Alternatives for avoiding and minimizing adverse effects to EFH such as soft start, noise dampening technologies, sequencing construction timing, and micro-siting and anchoring plans to avoid sensitive habitats.
- Potential impacts of the Project on spawning activity in the area, along with results of Deepwater Wind's 2018–2019 reconnaissance surveys to identify cod spawning aggregations in the region.
- A full delineation, enumeration, and characterization of all habitat types, including sensitive habitats that may be impacted by the Project.
- Impacts to essential "fish habitat, refuges, preserves, special management areas identified in coastal management programs, sanctuaries, rookeries, hard bottom habitat, chemosynthetic communities, and calving grounds; barrier islands, beaches, dunes, and wetlands" of Wainscott Pond and Georgica Pond.

Land Use and Coastal Infrastructure

Comments pertaining to land use and coastal infrastructure included concerns with existing land uses and plans, coastal infrastructure, easements, traffic, and construction impacts. Comments stated that the proposed Project should demonstrate compliance with local or state land use plans or master plans for wind farm siting and cable landings. Topics identified for analysis included traffic impacts from use of ports and O&M facilities; impacts to land use and water-dependent uses and access along the shoreline; impacts to inland traffic from cable and landing site construction activity; tonal noise from operation of the Interconnection Facility and East Hampton substation; and inadvertent releases and spills, management of debris and waste, and emergency preparedness for severe storm events.

Other land use and infrastructure comments included concerns regarding:

- Impacts to the Town of Wainscott's "Environmentally Sensitive Areas" identified in its Wainscott Hamlet Plan and the East Hampton Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan, which designates Georgica Pond as a locally Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitat.
- Potential need for a conversion of use if Hither Hills State Park, which is 100% Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and 6(f) protected, is chosen as the landing site.
- Potential encroachments on the WEA Exclusion Zone.
- Fair compensation for the easement grants proposed for the Town of East Hampton and Village of Wainscott.
- Design and construction standards to avoid interruptions in communication and service of the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR).

Concern was also expressed that the proposed Project will exacerbate existing beach erosion at the landing site, particularly if storm surges and higher tide elevations associated with climate change lead to further inland flooding.

Marine Mammals

Topics identified for analysis for marine species included seasonal distribution, abundance, and migration routes; impacts on spawning, habitat displacement, collisions with vessels; impacts on prey species; risk of entanglement; behavior and physiological impacts from noise and vessel traffic; EMF; localized changes in currents; and any other activities that may result in harassment, injury, or mortality. Comments encouraged the use of best available science and local data sources to support impact determinations on marine mammals from wind farm activities, while recognizing data limitations.

It was stated that the EIS should include site-specific information including the physical oceanography, as well as seasonal changes in the environment and how that influences the distribution and abundance of marine resources. Comments also specifically requested right whale analysis of 1) potential loss of communication and listening range, and 2) potential risk that habitat displacement into shipping lanes and the increased vessel traffic resulting from wind development itself may pose in terms of serious injury and mortality.

A range of mitigation measures were recommended in comments to minimize the risk of habitat degradation, vessel strike, and exposure to potentially harassing or injurious levels of noise to marine mammals, including:

- Avoiding pile driving and other high impact acoustic activity through the first week of September to protect for fin, humpback, and Minke whales.

- Seasonal restrictions on pile driving and other activities capable of producing noise of a level capable of potentially causing Level A and Level B harassment to North Atlantic right whale from November 1st through May 14th.
- Authorization of pile driving activities, with ramp-up, only during daylight hours and good visibility conditions to maximize the probability that North Atlantic right whales are detected and confirmed to be clear of the exclusion zone.
- Establishment of a minimum exclusion zone of 1,000 meters around all vessels conducting activities with noise levels that could result in injury or harassment to right whales (e.g., pile driving), in addition to a combination of NMFS-approved Protected Species Observers (PSOs) to watch for whale presence and passive acoustic monitoring with underwater recorders.
- Implementation of a speed restriction of 10 knots for all vessels operating within or transitioning to/from lease areas during times when Seasonal Management Areas are in operation and when North Atlantic right whales are present, or when mother-calf pairs, pregnant females, or aggregations of three or more whales (including surface active groups; indicative of feeding or social behavior) are expected to be present.
- Use of foundation types and installation methods that eliminate or reduce noise (e.g., BLUE Piling Technology), and the use of technically and commercially feasible and effective noise attenuation measures, including the use of the lowest practicable source level (e.g., bubble curtains, AdBm Noise Abatement System).
- Required commitment of DWSF to carry out scientific research and long-term monitoring to advance understanding of the effects of offshore wind development on marine and coastal resources and the effectiveness of mitigation technologies (e.g., noise attenuation, thermal detection) over the life of the Project.

Mitigation

Comments stated that the EIS should include development of additional mitigation measures which follow the sequence of avoidance, minimization, and mitigation of impacts; use adaptive management approach; and tier to other regional wind farm projects, studies, and lessons learned from European wind farm projects. Commenters also called for impact analysis and mitigation for natural resources in the nearshore area, such as wave breaks and slopes. It was stated that all EIS conclusions regarding impact assessment and effectiveness of minimization and mitigation techniques should be supported by peer-reviewed literature and reports.

Navigation and Vessel Traffic

Comments related to navigation and vessel traffic included concerns regarding vessel strikes, allisions and collisions, as well as potential displacement of vessel traffic, alteration of the movement of vessels, impacts to transit lanes, and conflict with existing harbor users for commercial and recreational vessels.

NEPA Process

NEPA process comments addressed the way in which the EIS will be prepared. Typical comments under this topic covered public meetings, notification, or other involvement; consultation with agencies and/or Native American tribes; or other procedural issues.

Commenters requested a longer public scoping period in which to provide comments, as well as more opportunities for meaningful public engagement and publication of all reports referenced in the EIS in a publicly accessible site. It was also stated that EIS preparation must be conducted in close coordination

with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, NMFS, appropriate state Coastal Zone Management offices, EPA, New York Department of Public Service, and local jurisdictions with permitting/authorization requirements. Comments also stated that BOEM should continue to engage and fully consider tribal interests in the Project.

Commenters encouraged BOEM to ensure that the EIS analysis is thorough and transparent, covering a sufficient geographic area to fully examine the impacts of the proposed Project and support an analysis of the cumulative effects. In particular, comments recommended that the analysis 1) provide aggregate impact determinations for all resources, 2) ensure that all impact determinations are supported by the analysis, containing both assessments of magnitude and direction (beneficial or negative), and 3) disclose impacts both prior to and after incorporation of mitigation measures.

Other Resources and Uses

This category included substantive comments that did not fall into the other resource areas, including airport traffic, radar systems, and port infrastructure improvements. Comments noted that airport traffic represents a current source of noise pollution for East Hampton. Recommended topics for EIS analysis included:

- Assessment whether adequate onshore infrastructure and space exist at the ports to support the proposed Project, as well as how these potential port improvements would impact the environment and community during construction and operation.
- An assessment of how radar systems will be affected, including a description of the types of radar systems fishermen use and how compatible they are with wind farms.
- An assessment of proposed Project impacts to federal survey efforts, including the federal multi-species bottom trawl survey (BTS) conducted on FSV Henry Bigelow, the surfclam/ocean quahog clam dredge survey conducted on chartered commercial fishing platforms, the integrated benthic/sea scallop habitat survey, and the shelf-wide Ecosystem Monitoring Survey (Ecomon).

Project Description

Project description comments requested additional information or clarification on a range of proposed Project components such as the size and height of turbines, cable capacity, decommissioning, and bond coverage. It was stated that the COP must provide enough specifics on each possible configuration covered by the proposed envelope to adequately evaluate impacts. Comments also indicated that the EIS should disclose construction period impacts and specific information regarding work that will occur at the proposed ports.

Other requests for additional proposed Project information to be disclosed included:

- The scale, location, and height of infrastructure that conjoins the SFEC with the LIPA System at the Cove Hollow substation in the Town of East Hampton.
- The type of surge protectors and lightning direct strike protection for the substation.
- Details on seafloor preparation work including how preparation activities will be conducted, the duration of the work, and anticipated impacts.
- Additional information on decommissioning the inter-array cables and what would be done in the foundation and cable protection areas.
- A statement attesting to the fact that the activities and facilities as proposed in the COP are or will be covered by an appropriate bond or other approved security.

Public Infrastructure/Services

Comments that related to public infrastructure and services such as public water, sewer, public safety, medical care, schools, and social services are included in this section. Many commenters expressed concerns regarding safety, emergency services, and road access, including 1) how DWSF will maintain and guarantee access for emergency services during the construction phase of the Project, and 2) potential traffic increases at intersection of Montauk Highway and Wainscott Northwest Road and adjacent roads.

Purpose and Need

Comments that relate to the Purpose and Need for the proposed Project itself (i.e., the justification for constructing and operating the proposed Project) stated that Purpose and Need has not been clearly proven because:

- Pricing discussions have not been transparent, and a determination cannot be made whether the Project will meet this goal without an economic review.
- The proposed Project goes against the original LIPA request for proposals which requested an energy source that did not require an expansion of the grid.
- The South Fork Wind Farm Project proposal and subsequent power purchase agreement with LIPA resulted from a 2015 request for proposal that was based on circa 2013 data that projected a need for new peak load resources to meet future demand on the South Fork. It has since been determined that the 2013 projections were in fact inaccurate and that peak demand was expected to continue on a downward trend in the 5-year period prior to the planned commissioning (2017–2022) and throughout the first half (2022–2032) of the wind farms 20-year expected life span.

Recreation and Tourism

Comments about recreation and tourism included concerns about parks, tourism, and public access impacts due to construction, maintenance, and decommissioning around Hither Hills State Park and Beach Lane. Commenters expressed concern that construction will interfere with the use of, and access to, public recreational areas during cable installation, maintenance and decommissioning. Topics for analysis in the EIS included potential impacts to tourism and beach going, swimming, surfing, sailing, pleasure boating, diving, bird watching, whale watching, and other wildlife viewing, as well as scenic enjoyment of the marine environment. To minimize impacts, commenters also made the following recommendations for incorporation in the EIS:

- Limit work at Hither Hills State Park and the Beach Lane public access area during summer peak recreation season.
- Avoid impacts to Hither Hills State Park and the Beach Lane public access area by using HDD.
- Evaluate proposals for aboveground infrastructure of equipment upgrades to Hither Hills State Park through New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

Sea Turtles

Comments specific to sea turtles requested that the EIS disclose seasonal distribution, abundance, and migration routes, as well as analysis of behavior and physiological impacts from vessel traffic, noise, foundation lighting, and EMF. Commenters also made suggestions on data collection techniques to improve surveying and baseline models and how to address fundamental gaps on sea turtle sensory ecology regarding hearing and navigation.

Socioeconomics

Socioeconomic comments addressed jobs, local businesses, community impacts, property values, and electricity prices. Topics proposed for analysis in the EIS included the potential negative or beneficial economic impacts to the communities that rely on the proposed lease areas, including changes to tourism and fishing revenue; impacts to home values and the tax base; potential changes to community character; and potential health impacts to beachgoers and residents in proximity to the export cable (e.g., from EMFs, potential contact with energized cable). Commenters also expressed Project opposition due to potential impacts to quality of life and increased electricity costs. Recommended measures to minimize socioeconomic impacts included avoidance of construction during peak summer tourism season, especially summer holiday weekends.

Commenters also expressed concerns over lower income groups and those who may be disproportionately impacted by the Project due to increased electricity prices, or changes to air, noise, and traffic conditions for port populations.

Terrestrial Plants and Animals

Comments regarding terrestrial plants and animals requested a thorough analysis of species, life history stages, or habitat components that would be susceptible to potential Project impacts, as well as the following analysis needs:

- Impacts to Wainscott Main Street mature trees, due to damage from compaction and root cutting associated with new construction projects and on-going maintenance.
- Impacts to Pine Barren Preserved trees from the construction and expansion of the Cove Hollow Substation.
- Impacts to Wainscott Pond and Georgica Pond species, the blue-spotted salamander or the diamondback terrapin turtle, which are both state-classified as Special Concern Species.
- Impacts to wildlife at Hither Hills, including endangered tiger salamander, marbled salamander, and hognose snake.
- Surveys for species along all alternative routes and timing restrictions, as applicable, to avoid impacts to rare, threatened, and endangered species.

Visual Impacts

Commenters expressed several concerns about visual and aesthetic impacts in Wainscott and Beach Lane, citing that Wainscott is both a scenic area of statewide significance (SASS) and a New York State Environmental Production Fund-identified scenic resource, while Beach Lane is a scenic site. Commenters requested the consideration of visual and aesthetic impacts from both the aboveground structures on land and in the ocean. In particular, comments indicated that the visual analysis should include simulations along the proposed cable route.

Water Quality

Water quality comments included concerns regarding groundwater, sedimentation, ballast discharge, erosion, pollution, turbidity, adherence to federal and state standards, and discharge permits. Comments requested that the EIS disclose water quality baseline data and changes to dissolved oxygen, nutrients, and turbidity (sediment suspension and deposition), as they relate to state and federal water quality standards. Other EIS analysis requests included:

- Analysis of water quality impacts from pollutant emissions and chemical leachates.
- Evaluation of currents, bathymetry, microclimates, and MetOcean data.

- How vessel operations will prevent the discharge of pollutants from routine releases as well as potential releases of non-native marine organisms through the discharge of ballast water originating from foreign ports (if such vessels will be used during the construction or maintenance of the Project).
- Information to determine whether the Project will result in discharges of pollutants to waters of the U.S., requiring authorization.
- Micro-gyres and circulation changes around structures.
- Impacts to groundwater quality and designated special groundwater preserve areas or priority drinking water protection areas.
- Impacts to saltmarshes that provide significant ecological and socioeconomic benefits, including water quality improvement, aquatic productivity, habitat, flood protection and stormwater treatment, as well as alternatives that avoid impacts to saltmarshes, as feasible.

Wetlands

Commenters stated that the EIS must document compliance with Clean Water Act. Comments also requested a comprehensive wetlands analysis that considers the direct, indirect, temporary, and permanent impacts to wetlands, including 1) water quality impacts and erosion or sedimentation impacts to wetlands or waterbodies, and 2) any clearing impacts for the proposed terrestrial construction activities resulting in a change (either permanent or temporary) of cover type within a wetland (e.g., converting a forested wetland to an emergent or scrub/shrub wetland). It was noted that the proposed Wainscott route impacts to two highly sensitive wetland areas in Wainscott Pond and Georgica Pond.

Several comments specifically focused on measures for avoidance/minimization/mitigation to be incorporated into the EIS, as follows:

- All construction practices which will be utilized to avoid and minimize impacts to wetlands and waters should be documented in the EIS. Specifically, standard conditions to protect wetlands and waters should be documented.
- The EIS should include an evaluation of ways in which each alternative (in particular sea-to-shore transition) can be designed to avoid wetland or other water, or where unavoidable, minimize direct and indirect impacts.
- The EIS should also include a conceptual discussion of anticipated compensatory mitigation for unavoidable direct and indirect impacts to wetlands and other waters, including cover type conversions from construction and operation of the Project.

APPENDIX A

Submission Information

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Table A-1 lists the name and agency or organization affiliation (if any) for each person who provided a scoping submission. The submission ID listed below corresponds to the Comment ID in the preceding tables.

Tabled A-1. Scoping Contact Information

Letter ID	First Name	Last Name	Title	Organization Name	Address	City	State	Zip	Phone	Email
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BOEM-2018-0010-0004	Eric	Bodner		Beach Lane Deepwater Project	200 E 62nd Street, Apt 23A	New York	NY	10065	9734642897	ebodner@comcast.net
BOEM-2018-0010-0005	Amanda	Polk			2 Oakwood Court	Wainscott	NY	11975	2022304549	amandapolk@aol.com
BOEM-2018-0010-0006	Jared	Solomon			9 Wainscott NY Road	Wainscott	NY	11975		jls1224@mac.com
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BOEM-2018-0010-0064	Rosalind	Landis		SaveBeachLane.com	16 East 68th Street	New York	NY	10065	917 847 6310	Rozlandis@hotmail.com
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BOEM-2018-0010-0070	Jim	Weigly			PO Box 310, 20 Beach Lane	Wainscott	NY	11975	6315370972	jweigley@aol.com
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BOEM-2018-0010-0073	Matt	Gove		Surfrider Foundation	72 South Portland Avenue, Apt 3	Brooklyn	NY	11217	9522504545	mgove@surfrider.org
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BOEM-2018-0010-0075	Sean	McCarthy			7 Whitney Lane	Wainscott	NY	11975	6463345559	urbanfarmer@gmail.com
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BOEM-2018-0010-0078	Ken	Landis			16 East 68 Street	New York	NY	10065	9178474015	ken@landiscap.com
BOEM-2018-0010-0079	Timothy	Timmerman		Environmental Protection Agency	5 Post Office Square	Boston	MA	02109	617-918-1025	timmermann.timothy@epa.gov
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BOEM-2018-0010-0081	Bryan	Hunt			74 Wainscott Stone Road	Wainscott	NY	11975-0775	6315373349	bryanhunt9@mac.com
BOEM-2018-0010-0082	Daniel	Spitzer		Trustees of the Freeholders and Commonalty of the Town of East Hampton and the Town of East Hampton	140 Pearl Street	Buffalo	NY	14202	716-856-4000	dspitzer@hodgsonruss.com
BOEM-2018-0010-0083	Holly	Goyert	Bird-Smart Wind Energy Campaign Director	American Bird Conservancy	4301 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 451	Washington	DC	20008		hgoyert@abcbirds.org
BOEM-2018-0010-0084	Alison	Chase	Senior Policy Analyst, Oceans, Nature Program	Natural Resources Defense Council	40 West 20th Street	New York	NY	10011	212-727-4551	achase@nrdc.org
BOEM-2018-0010-0085	Eileen	Murphy		NYS Department of Environmental Conservation	625 Broadway, 14th Floor	Albany	NY	12233-1010	518-402-2797	eileen.murphy@dec.ny.gov
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BOEM-2018-0010-0091	Eileen	Murphy		NYS Department of Environmental Conservation	625 Broadway, 14th Floor	Albany	NY	12054	518-402-2797	eileen.murphy@dec.ny.gov
BOEM-2018-0010-0092	Charles	Samuelson			38 Merriwood Drive	Wainscott	NY	11975		chuck.samuelson@gmail.com
BOEM-2018-0010-0093	Brian	Chmielecki			162 Merchants Ave.	Taftville	CT	06380		cwren112411-res18@yahoo.com
BOEM-2018-0010-0094	Rachel	Gruzen			PO Box 2016	Amagansett	NY	11930	9177962128	rachelgruzen@hotmail.com
BOEM-2018-0010-0095_New Bedford Comment Card	Alex	Zygmunt								
BOEM-2018-0010-0096_Narragansett Comment Card (1)	Donald	Fox		F/V Lightning Bay, The Town Dock						dfox@towndock.com
BOEM-2018-0010-0099_Narragansett Comment Card (2)	Dave	Arifach		F/V Caitlin &Mairead	PO Box 1036	Montauk	NY	11954		captainhappy@optononline.net
BOEM-2018-0010-0100_East Hampton Comment Card (2)	Dell	Cullum		EH Town Trustee	267 Bluff Road	Amagansett	N	11930		kachina35@gmail.com
BOEM-2018-0010-0101_East Hampton Comment Card (3)	Dell	Cullum		EH Town Trustee	267 Bluff Road	Amagansett	N	11930		kachina35@gmail.com
BOEM-2018-0010-0102_East Hampton Comment Card (4)	Dell	Cullum		EH Town Trustee	267 Bluff Road	Amagansett	N	11930		kachina35@gmail.com
BOEM-2018-0010-0103_East Hampton Comment Card (5)	Peter	Strugatz			42 Bonac Woods Lane	East Hampton	NY	11937		strugatzp@gmail.com
BOEM-2018-0010-0104_East Hampton Comment Card (6)	Joseph	DeLauro	Resident		PO Box 2825	Southampton	NY			joedelauro@gmail.com
BOEM-2018-0010-0105_East Hampton Comment Card (7)	Rick	Drew	Trustee	East Hampton Town Trustees	2 Powder Hill Lane	East Hampton	NY	11937		rpdrew@hotmail.com

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BOEM-2018-0010-0107_TownofEastHamptonLetter	Peter	Van Scoyoc	Supervisor	East Hampton Town Supervisor	159 Pantigo Road	East Hampton	NY	11937	631-324-4140	pvanscoyoc@ehampton.gov
BOEM-2018-0010-0108_BOEM-2018-0010_South Fork (NOAA)	Michael	Pentony	Regional Administrator	United States Department of Commerce, National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration	55 Great Republic Drive	Gloucester	MA	01930	9782819176	susan.tuxbury@noaa.gov
BOEM-2018-0010-0109_DMF to BOEM NOI for EIS_11-15-18	David	Pierce	Director	Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Division of Marine Fisheries	251 Causeway Street, Suite 400	Boston	MA	02114	5087429749	
BOEM-2018-0010-0110_RIDEM_Comments_on_NOI	Jason	McNamee	Chief of Marine Resources	Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management	Three Fort Wetherill Road	Jamestown	RI	02835	4014231920	
BOEM-2018-0010-0111_NEPA comment 10 29 2018	Marissa	Hassevoort								
BOEM-2018-0010-0111_NEPA comment 10 29 2018	Emily	Morningstar								
BOEM-2018-0010-0111_NEPA comment 10 29 2018	Tristan	Sauerman								
BOEM-2018-0010-0112_Public Cmt_Saltwater Anglers_11_12_2018	Stephen	Medeiros	President	Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association	PO Box 1465	Coventry	RI	02816	4018262121	
BOEM-2018-0010-0113_DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR Mail - [EXTERNAL] SFWF - Gary Cobb 110818	Gary	Cobb	agent							12thgenbonacker@gmail.com
BOEM-2018-0010-0114_East Hampton Comment Card (1)	Don	Matheson	citizen		50 Manor Lane South	East Hampton	NY	11937		
BOEM-2018-0010-0119_Stakeholders Position Statement final draft	Gary	Cobb	agent	The Trustees of the Freeholders and Commonalty of the Town of East Hampton		East Hampton	NY			
BOEM-2018-0010-DRAFT-116_	Zachary	Cohen			939 Springs Fireplace Road	East Hampton	NY	11937	6313243403	l.z.cohen@chicagobooth.edu
BOEM-2018-010-0097_11-8-18 Transcripts	NA									
BOEM-2018-010-0098_NewBedford Transcripts	NA									
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BOEM-2018-010-0118_New England Fishery Management Council	Thomas	Nies	Executive Director	New England Fishery Management Council		Newburyport	MA	01950	9784650492	tnies@nefmc.org
East Hampton Transcripts	NA									
Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association, Inc.	Beth	Casoni	Executive Director	Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association, Inc.	8 Otis Place	Scituate	MA	02066	781-545-6984	
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