

Maine Commercial  
Fishing Safety Council

Janine Drouin, Chair

Curtis Haycock, Vice Chair

Ann Backus, Secretary

Members:

Kris Boehmer

John Drouin

Peter Gasperini

Marc McCole

John McMillan

Parker Poole

Mark Murry, ex officio

Jeff Nichols, ex officio

## Commercial Fishing Safety Council

Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting, June 16, 2022 (draft)

Present: Ann Backus, Kris Boehmer, John Drouin, Janine Drouin, Mark Murry, Jeff Nichols, also guests Genevieve MacDonald (Aquaventis), Meredith Mendelson (DMR) and Monique Coombs (Maine Coast Fishermen's Association-Fishermens Wellness Program)

Absent: John McMillan, Marc McCole, Curtis Haycock, Peter Gasparini, Parker Poole.

I. Welcome – Janine Drouin, CFSC Chairman

II. Minutes of Quarterly meeting March 17, 2022, unanimously accepted

III. Presentation by Meredith Mendelson, Deputy Commissioner.

Deputy Commissioner Mendelson provided an update on the Wind Power/Turbines for Maine waters. Navigation and safety-related recommendations are presently in draft form. The Fisheries Working Group (FWG) is discussing communications and monitoring; there are 11 recommendations. Siting guidance is in progress and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management is involved.

Regarding Navigation and Safety considerations for the FWG to work on: AIS, markings of wind turbines, charts, sound. There will be grid of 1x1 nautical miles and cellular coverage within the wind farms.

Genevieve mentioned 2 pilot site windfarms near Monhegan Island.

DMR could make a recommendation that the CFSC be put on the roster for notices. Janine asked if this is a state plan. Meredith clarified that it is a strategy for state waters and mentioned that there is presently a public comment period and that the CSFC should weigh-in within the next two weeks by writing or phone. The AIS (Automated Information System(?)) was mentioned as being included in the Monhegan site.

To the question as to whether EMF leaks from cables, Meredith confirmed that it does leak and that conversation needs to happen re “mattressing” of cables. Genevieve mentioned that there is an advisory about exclusion but no plans for co-location of fishery. [need clarification here. AB] Meredith mentioned that it is unlikely that human interaction (with EMF) will happen as the waters are too deep. She added that there is no exclusionary area around the turbines – no safety zones and the USCG is not planning regulatory exclusion.

Genevieve mentioned that fisheries will have input into the array design and how close or far apart the turbines are. Meredith confirmed that some people may worry about the impact of spacing. It was suggested that we invite Dan Kennedy, safety officer, to a meeting to discuss lighting and anchoring of turbines.

#### IV. Presentation by Monique Coombs, Maine Coast Fishermen's Association – Fishermen Wellness Program.

Monique introduced the Fishermen's Wellness Program which is a program of the Maine Coast Fishermens Association (MCFA) that provides direct community programs from downeast to southern Maine. She mentioned that MCFA has three life rafts that can be shared among fishermen while their rafts are being repacked. Chase Leavitt maintains these rafts. Fishermen can drop off their rafts at Chase Leavitt and pick up a loaner.

Monique described rapid response funding that MCFA secured during COVID, and, through a collaboration with NAMI Health Affiliates of Maine, MCFA paid for one to five counseling sessions for fishermen. Other activities of the Fishermen Wellness program include 1) mental health first aid – a skills-based training offered in Brunswick; 2) association with Maine AgrAbility who will make boat calls to asses accommodations to avoid overuse injuries; 3) a blog with sketches for activities that fishermen can try; 4) "industrial athlete" approach to encourage good health and well-being; 5) Fishing Forward Podcasts in collaboration with the Northeast Center for Occupational Health and Safety and offered through coastalroutes.org. One of these podcasts is on moral injury-asking if fishermen do things that they feel are morally injurious.

Additional comments from Michelle centered around the importance of mental health for fishermen and a connection MCFA has with Maine Therapy.org that offers counseling around suicide ideation. She mentioned a mobile health program that is gearing up with Ann Backus and the Harvard Education and Research Center. Michelle has become accredited with CCSME and will work with counselors re how to approach fishermen. Jeff asked about the connection of risk taking to mental health; John praised the safety equipment program, to which Michelle replied perhaps we should have a raft loaner in Cutler!

#### V. Update on Initiatives

A. The Near Miss Survey: Jeff Nichols first reported that there is an ACT pending in the legislature to improve boater safety on Maine waters. Also, the Commissioner of Fisheries and Wildlife is setting up a stakeholder group to provide input on training coastal fisheries. There is a deadline for those who are interested in being part of this group. Jeff will send around an email.

With respect to the survey: We have ended the survey with 187 responses. Some of the data include

- 1) Upper extremities and trunk injuries = 24 of 55 responses; 2) 87 near misses reported; 3) 88 reports of entanglement in rope, collisions at sea, rope parting and rope tension; 4) 85 reported they had controlled a potentially hazardous situation; 5) 87 provided answers as to how they responded and 18 of those mentioned seamanship was responsible for helping them stay calm and alert; 6) 87 reported they took action to prevent an incident.
- 2) In response to training, CPR and First Aid were mentioned as well as professional experience. The types of training mentioned included CPR/FIRST AID, navigation, water survival.
- 3) In response to questions about the need for education, respondents mentioned lobster trawls – an issue related to the new regulations associated with the Large Whale Take Reduction Program and drug and alcohol safety.
- 4) Ninety one of 187 participated in the drawing for safety equipment and 100 respondents replied they were willing to be contacted for additional information.
- 5) In terms of demographics the majority held lobster licenses, and 14 had aquaculture licenses.

It was decided that we would email the folks who were willing to be contacted, thank them and start a conversation with them based on the survey findings. Ann will take this on.

Kris commented that the navigation issue gets into licensing. Jeff asked if we want to look at the programs available to address some of these issues? Mark mentioned that there are programs that people are not aware of.

Federally permitted operators have to have CPR and FIRST AID. John suggested that while we have to be careful with some regulations, there are people who need the information. The following suggestions were made: FORUM – navigation course, seamanship course, discussion of what experience brings to fishing safety. John suggested having industry donate survival suits and flares, etc. Kris commented that the people we need to reach are already fishing.

B. Update on Safety Symposium - tabled because John McMillan was not present

C. Update on Medico and Medevac Data: Ann presented data re Maine Medico and Medevac incidents from the USCG District I Incident Database. Documents attached.

Kris mentioned that the captain should know the medical status of each crew member and that each crew and the captain should provide a sealed envelope containing medical information that would be available on board in case of a medical emergency.

VI. Other business:

- A. Mark Murray presented a new Remote Meeting Policy that we should approve and that will guide future meetings of the Council.
- B. Kris mentioned the risk of pogie fishing and stability issues as a point for discussion. Others agreed but mentioned that we missed the window this year given that the pogie season will close June 17, 2022. Need to discuss around April 2023.
- C. John mentioned it will be difficult to have input around the wind farm issues because fishermen don't want it. DMR needs to be aware that we (CFSC) are here. Meredith mentioned that the CFSC has been re-established, and if we keep going in this direction we will be on everybody's radar.
- D. The suggestion was made to have Mark reach out to the members who weren't here. For September and the report to the Commissioner we will need to have a vote on the report.

VII. Adjourned 5:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Backus

August 25, 2022