

State of Maine Blue Economy Task Force Meeting

Friday, January 10, 2025, 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM EST

Virtual via Zoom

Meeting Summary

Legislative Expectation

“The Blue Economy Task Force (BETF) aims to support Maine's emergence as a center for blue economy innovation and opportunity in the 21st century. *Blue economy* means business sectors that rely on the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic health, improved livelihoods, jobs or ecosystem health.” ([LD 1286](#))

Meeting Objectives

- Review and discuss the initial draft legislative report.
- Come to agreement on the final set of recommendations.
- Continue to meet the requirements of the [statute](#).

In Attendance (in person & via Zoom)

Task Force Members: Tim Agnew (Bold Ocean Ventures), Nick Battista (Island Institute), Sebastian Belle (Maine Aquaculture Association), Dan Berger (Maine International Trade Center), Keith Bisson (CEI), Deborah Bouchard (Aquaculture Research Institute), Ben Coniff (Luke’s Lobster), Kristen Danaher (Washburn and Doughty), Alison Feibel (Acadian Sea Plants), Blaine Grimes (GMRI), Audrey Hodgdon (Hodgdon Yachts), Sean Ireland (Windward Development Group), Annie Langston Noll (Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center), Liz MacDonald (Atlantic Sea Farms), Charlotte Mace (DECD), Ben Martens (Maine Coast Fishermen’s Association), Allison Melvin (Greenhead Lobster), Beth Orcutt (Bigelow Laboratory), Nina Scheepers (Maine Venture Fund), Mike Szemerda (Cooke), Charles Tilberg (UNE), Robert Vanmeter (Portland Fish Exchange), Jake Ward (University of Maine)

Others: Michael Conathan, Laura Singer, Charles Colgan, and Dana O’Brien (Project Consultants), The Honorable Jill Dusenbury (Maine State Senate), Anne Schlitt (Maine Development Foundation)

Agenda and Summary

- **Welcome/Introductions:** Michael Conathan (Lead Project Consultant) welcomed the Task Force and introduced the consulting team.
- **Review Agenda:** Laura Singer (Project Consultant) shared the agenda, highlighted meeting logistics, and referenced the shared Google drive where Task Force materials are housed.
- **Draft Report Impressions:** Mr. Conathan walked the Task Force through a draft report that was presented to the group preceding the meeting. Members offered

overall impressions of the report and specific feedback related to its findings and recommendations.

- **Next Steps:** Mr. Conathan provided an overview of work to be completed up to and including the submission of the final report on January 31, 2025. A proposed final report, which includes feedback from this Task Force meeting, will be shared with the group on or near January 24, 2025.

Discussion

Task Force members provided thoughtful guidance that included a general call to 1) tighten the report; 2) identify more specific Maine blue economy examples to help legislators see what is currently happening in their backyards; 3) reorder and prioritize the list of recommendations and to consider adding recommendations related to food and data collection; 4) to be very clear where the Maine State Legislature can be helpful in implementing the proposed recommendations; and 5) note that some Task Force members are not aligned on findings and recommendations made in past reports (e.g., the Maine Offshore Wind Roadmap).

Next Steps

Consultants will draft a final report based on feedback from the Task Force.

Upcoming Meetings:

February TBD