

Maine Offshore Wind Research Array Fishing and Fisheries Working Sessions

Winter/Spring 2021

Overview: Maine is pursuing a federal lease for a research array in the Gulf of Maine. The State is committed to leading an iterative stakeholder engagement process in order to inform project decision making. Through this process, the State seeks to work with a variety of stakeholders to shape both site selection and development of the research framework. To facilitate transparent dialogue regarding the research array application, a series of working sessions will be held with 1) fishing industry members and related stakeholders (Fisheries Working Sessions); and 2) stakeholders with knowledge and expertise to inform potential marine wildlife considerations (“Wildlife Working Sessions”). This document addresses the Fisheries Working Sessions only.

Objective of Working Sessions: *State will provide transparent information sharing throughout process of application development. Participants may provide advice and recommendations to the state agencies to help guide their decisions involving the siting of the research project area, research areas of interest for the research project to learn from, and other relevant project design elements to be considered for the research lease application.*

Key Questions to Address:

- *Siting –*
 - Where are the opportunities for the fishing industry to inform the siting process?
 - *Location (e.g. areas to avoid, habitat to avoid, areas of less conflict with fishing activity)*
 - *Configuration (e.g. layout of turbines in grid or lines)*
 - *Orientation (e.g. northeast/southwest)*
 - *Navigational space (preference for turbines closer or further apart)*
 - *Discussion at this stage, future opportunities for engagement prior to decisions:*
 - *Anchoring system (e.g. how substrate impacts anchor selection and installation, scope of anchor chains)*
 - *Interarray cables (e.g. connection from platform to seabed, connections between turbines)*
 - *Transmission cable (e.g. route of cable to shore, understanding impacts of burial vs. mattressing)*
 - What information exists to inform the above discussions, what information is needed, how can it be obtained and used appropriately?
 - How is this information being used to inform the siting process for the research array?
 - What lessons can we take from the siting process to inform potential future development in the Gulf of Maine?
 - What baseline information will we want to collect at the site if the lease is granted, prior to installation?

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- *Research –*
 - What do we want to better understand regarding the potential impacts of floating offshore wind technology on marine resources and fishing activity? (e.g. ability for different gear types to fish around floating platforms, aggregation/avoidance of marine species, impacts to benthic environment)
 - How to construct a cohesive research framework and plan around these questions, so that information gathered can be of greatest benefit?
 - How will we use this information in the future to inform potential commercial developments?

Participants: Working sessions are open to any interested individuals. Consistent participation is strongly desired and an effort will be made to have participation that represents the diversity in fishing activity, both geographic and gear type, in the area of interest.

General Timeline:

- *March –* 2-4 evening meetings of roughly 2 hours.
- *March/April –* Joint meeting with Wildlife stakeholders
- *April/May –* (Tentative) meeting to review additional stakeholder feedback and finalize recommendations.

On-going: Developing a successful application is only the first step in a multi-year process before a project is proposed, reviewed and approved. The stakeholder engagement process will likely to evolve, after the submittal of the research lease application to continue dialogue, communication and advice regarding offshore wind.

DRAFT – Fisheries Sessions Plan

Rules of the Road

- Participate consistently across the sessions if you can
- Stay focused on the agenda topics at hand
- Participation can occur via phone or Zoom
- There will be other informal means to interact as well (one on one conversations, dockside conversations later in spring)
- **Participating in giving advice to DMR/GEO in no way constitutes approval of nor agreement with OSW development in the GOM and such participation in these sessions shall not be used to suggest otherwise by the State**

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Work Plan

<p align="center">March 9</p>	<p><i>Fisheries Working Session #1: <u>Data and Siting Considerations</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions and purpose of Working Sessions • Brief review of the broad area, exclusion zones already known (DoD, shipping lanes) and the rationale for its selection • Detailed dive into existing fishing and fisheries data • Discussion of the January DMR survey • Assessment of further “no go” areas within the broad area • Questions, response, and discussion around DMR’s initial and draft analysis • Next steps: 1) further analysis or data review wanted by participants; 2) review and refinement of next session’s agenda.
<p align="center">Mid-March*</p>	<p><i>Fisheries Working Session #2:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief review of Session #1 and follow-up to the action items and requests from Session #1 • Further review of updated siting assessment and issues • Considering potential configuration options within a site to avoid, minimize, or mitigate fishing and fisheries impacts • Brief review of wildlife issues and areas identified by Wildlife Session(s) • Identifying initial data needs that might be filled as part of this effort: 1) prior to construction – the next 2 to 3 years; and, 4) during and post-construction • Discussion and advice on informal and direct outreach by DMR to coastal communities and fishermen in April
<p align="center">Late-March*</p>	<p><i>Fisheries Working Session #3:</i> <u>Reviewing Data and Siting Information/Input:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up to the action items and requests from Session #2 • Review updated siting assessment regarding areas to exclude within the area and data needs based on discussion and input to date • Review approach to outreach and engagement for April <p><u>Informing the State’s Data Collection and Research Approach:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are key research questions about floating offshore wind technology and potential impacts in the Gulf of Maine that could be explored through the research array?
<p align="center">TBD & as Needed</p>	<p><i>Joint WG Workshop with Fisheries and Wildlife</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refine siting criteria overall, if needed • Review, discuss, and refine project siting locations and their pros and cons for broader review • Review state’s outreach plan for April
<p align="center">April/Early May</p>	<p><i>DMR Outreach and Engagement Dockside</i></p>
<p align="center">April/May</p>	<p><i>Fisheries (or Joint Fisheries/Wildlife) Working Session #4:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of outreach and updated assessment on siting choices within the area • Final discussion of data needs and research areas or themes to be considered for the application • Next steps

* Later meeting agendas may evolve, based on needs and interest of participants