

## Maine Offshore Wind Research Array

### Wildlife Work 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 will 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 stakeholders with knowledge and expertise to inform potential marine wildlife considerations (Wildlife Work Sessions). There will be a separate set of sessions with held with fishing industry members and related stakeholders (Fishing and Fisheries Work Sessions).

**Objective of Working Sessions:** *State will provide transparent information sharing throughout process of application development. Provide advice and recommendations to the State to help guide its 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:

- *Knowledge/Data* - What do we know about the proposed area: what species utilize this area, what are wildlife presence and absence, including birds, bats and marine mammals?
- *Siting* - What are siting options for the array based on siting criteria, existing data, and dialogue and what are the advantages and disadvantages of potential locations for siting? Within a potential site, what options might there be to adjust siting or array configuration to reduce potential for impact or increase research benefits?
- *Research* - What are unique research areas of focus and questions we have about floating offshore wind technology and potential impacts in the Gulf of Maine? What do we want to learn and why (i.e., baseline conditions, behavior around floating structures, etc.)?

#### Rules of the Road:

- Working sessions are open to any interested individuals with an effort made to have balance participation by area of expertise and interests
- Participants are asked to engage consistently across the sessions if you can
- Working sessions will 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 and potential additional forums later in spring)
- **Participating in giving advice to the State 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**

**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 evolve after the submittal of the research lease application to continue dialogue, communication and advice regarding offshore wind.

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**DRAFT – Wildlife Sessions Plan**

<p align="center"><b>March 5</b></p>	<p><i>Wildlife Working Session #1: <u>Data and Siting Considerations</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions and purpose of Working Sessions</li> <li>• Detailed dive into the data: what we know about wildlife in the area of interest             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Which species are present spatially and temporally?</i></li> <li>○ <i>Which species are most vulnerable (likely to be affected)?</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• What data is missing and what can we gather about the most vulnerable species in 2-3 months</li> <li>• What does the available data tell us, if anything, about the sites within the area of interest for minimizing impact on wildlife?</li> <li>• Initial discussion of siting - areas of high, moderate or low potential for interaction, including uncertainties</li> <li>• <i>Assign tasks for gathering additional data and information to inform siting</i></li> </ul>
<p align="center"><b>Mid-March*</b></p>	<p><i>Wildlife Working Session #2:</i> <i><u>Reviewing Data and Siting Information/Input:</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of WG 1 and any follow-up on data to inform siting</li> <li>• Further review of updated siting assessment and issues and review initial fishery siting location options</li> <li>• Explore potential configuration options to minimize potential for interaction with wildlife</li> <li>• Finalize draft siting broad considerations – areas of high, moderate or low potential for interaction with vulnerable wildlife</li> </ul> <p><i><u>Informing the State’s Data Collection &amp; Research Approach</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What data can be collected in next 2- 5 years to inform project?</li> <li>• Discuss research areas and questions, discuss research approach</li> <li>• <i>Determine if additional working session is needed</i></li> </ul>
<p align="center"><b>Late March/Early April*</b></p>	<p><i>Joint WG Workshop with Fisheries</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refine siting criteria overall, if needed</li> <li>• Review, discuss, and refine project siting considerations and their pros and cons for broader review</li> <li>• Review and discuss baseline data needs in advance of project design and construction</li> <li>• Review and discuss possible research focus and questions for the array itself</li> </ul>
<p align="center"><b>April/Early May</b></p>	<p><i>DMR Outreach and Engagement Dockside Potential for other Engagement Activities</i></p>
<p align="center"><b>TBD</b></p>	<p><i>Joint Fisheries/Wildlife Working Session</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Summary of outreach and updated assessment on siting choices within the area</i></li> <li>• <i>Final discussion of data needs and research areas or themes to be considered for the application</i></li> <li>• <i>Next steps</i></li> </ul>

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