



MEETING 1: ADVISORY GROUP PURPOSE AND FOUNDATION

Thursday, May 26, 2022 – 9am-1:30pm
Searsport Town Office
1 Union Street, Searsport, ME

Advisory Group Members and the public were offered the option to participate remotely.

Objective: To define the State’s role in Maine’s Offshore Wind Initiative; describe the role and responsibilities of the Offshore Wind Advisory Group (OSWPAG) in the port planning and development process; build rapport for the planning process among the project team and advisory group members.

MEETING TAKEAWAYS

1. Maine has the opportunity to be in the center of the offshore wind industry. The distinguished and diverse viewpoints represented on the OSWPAG are what the State of Maine needs to inform this port planning and siting process.
2. No port siting decisions have been made and Maine fully acknowledges the need to undertake a rigorous alternatives analysis leading to the identification of a preferred location that has the least adverse impact to the environment.
3. The National Environment Policy Act (NEPA) provides an overarching umbrella and, at a high-level, the regulatory framework for Maine’s port planning process and future decision-making.
4. In response to a prompt during introductions, members offered questions about the emerging offshore wind industry and Maine’s planning process. The planning team will use these questions to inform the development of future meeting agendas.
5. The OSWPAG is charged to advise the State on its planning and selection of a port to support commercial scale offshore wind energy production. Member and co-chair responsibilities, meeting procedures, and the anticipated meeting schedule for 2022 were reviewed.
6. Any OSWPAG meetings beyond 2022 are to be determined and won’t be scheduled without OSWPAG input.
7. Additional materials for OSWPAG review, such as the documents prepared by the Sears Island Joint Use Planning Committee, are posted on the OSWPAG website under Additional Project Information. (See website link at the bottom of the page.)
8. OSWPAG member interviews found that members’ knowledge of offshore wind and port planning are varied and their interest and desire to learn and be engaged are high.
9. Members’ questions during the meeting reflected their interest in understanding the offshore wind market, its costs and timeline for development, including needed public infrastructure and improvements, and its operations and physical connections to the mainland.



ATTENDANCE

ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS

Beth Ahearn, Maine Conservation Voters,
Co-Chair
James Gillway, Town of Searsport, Co-Chair
Matt Cannon, Sierra Club Maine
Joshua Conover, Islesboro Marine Enterprises
Habib Dagher, Ph.D., P.E., University of Maine
College of Engineering
Dennis Damon, Maine Port Authority
Eliza Donoghue, Maine Audubon
Francis Eanes, Maine Labor Climate Council
David Gelinias, Capt., Penobscot Bay & River
Pilots Association
Jessie Gunther, Retired Judge, Public At-Large
Member
Ben Lucas, Maine Chamber of Commerce
Sean Mahoney, Conservation Law Foundation
Matt Marks, Associated General Contractors of
Maine
Paul Mercer, Consultant to Governor's Office
Steve Miller, Islesboro Islands Trust
Rolf Olsen, Friends of Sears Island
Jim Therriault, Sprague Energy

SPEAKERS

Bruce Van Note, MaineDOT
Dan Burgess, Governor's Energy Office
Matt Burns, Maine Port Authority

OTHER MAINE DOT PERSONNEL AND CONSULTANTS

Nate Benoit, MaineDOT

Michael Cole, MaineDOT
Kristen Chamberlain, MaineDOT
Paul Merrill, MaineDOT
Kay Rand, Consultant
Bill Plumpton, Gannett Fleming, Inc.
Adam Archual, Gannett Fleming, Inc.
Michelle Brummer, Gannett Fleming, Inc.

PUBLIC, IN-PERSON

Dianne Smith, Searsport Resident
Paul Biddle, Director, Searsport Emergency
Management Agency
Genevieve McDonald, New England Aqua Ventus
(NEAV)
Joan Saxe, Sierra Club Maine
Beverly Roxby, City of Belfast Climate Crisis
Committee and Sierra Club Maine Volunteer
Bonnie L. Martensled, Searsport Resident
Caleb Jackson, Maine Heritage Coast Trust

PUBLIC, VIRTUAL

Laurie Schweikert
Christina Breen
Gwyneth Roberts
Susan White
Dave Wilby
Becky Bartovics
Sabrina DeTurk
Chris Wissemann
Adam Lachman
Amber Thompson
Carol Woodcock



MEETING NOTES

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Bill Plumpton of Gannett Fleming, Inc. opened the first meeting of the Offshore Wind Advisory Group by thanking members for serving on the Advisory Group and for sharing their individual and organizational perspectives throughout this planning process. He thanked James Gillway, Searsport Town Manager, for hosting the meeting, and invited others to give opening remarks.

Dan Burgess, Director of the Governor's Energy Office, expressed his gratitude to the Advisory Group. He noted the Biden Administration's goal of at least 30 gigawatts of offshore wind energy by 2030 and the associated opportunity for economic development. He stated that no port siting decisions have been made and Maine fully acknowledges the need to undertake an alternatives analysis and agree to a Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA). He closed by stating that he looks forward to the Advisory Group's input on issues.

Bruce A. Van Note, Commissioner of MaineDOT, also thanked the Advisory Group members for their time. He noted that Maine has the opportunity to be in the center of the offshore wind industry. He acknowledged that the distinguished and diverse viewpoints represented on the Advisory Group will help the State of Maine inform its port planning and decision-making processes. Commissioner Van Note stated that the preliminary technical engineering report, the [Moffat & Nichol Offshore Wind Port Infrastructure Feasibility Study](#), identified Searsport as a possible port site; this was a first look at conditions and possible locations and configurations. The planning process will need to gather and develop much more information to fulfill the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Commissioner Van Note closed by noting that he will be listening for pragmatic, solution-oriented discussions from the Advisory Group.

Beth Ahearn, Co-Chair of the Advisory Group, recognized that the members have much to learn from one another and the planning team. She asked members to keep an open mind and listen respectfully to the many voices on the Advisory Group as their discussions strive to balance offshore wind (OSW) and conservation.

James Gillway, Co-Chair of the Advisory Group, shared that there is only one Searsport in the entire world. He stated that OSW has the potential to bring many benefits to Maine and its communities. He shared his excitement to be part of the solution to clean energy.

Bill Plumpton concluded the opening remarks by stating that Advisory Group members should communicate, at any time, what information they need to provide informed advice to the state.

2. Member Introductions

Bill Plumpton asked Advisory Group members to introduce themselves and to state a question they would like to be answered at some time in the planning process. Questions such as these



could help shape future meeting agendas and communications with the Advisory Group between meetings.

Members and their Questions for the Planning Process

Beth Ahearn, Director of Government Affairs, Maine Conservation Voters, Co-Chair

- Can we seize this tremendous opportunity to harness offshore wind and make everyone happy?

James Gillway, Town Manager, Town of Searsport, Co-Chair

- Do you like history? Searsport has a long and rich history.

Matt Cannon, Campaign & Policy Associate Director, Sierra Club Maine

- How do we help Mainers balance renewable energy development and conservation and preservation of special environmental resources?

Joshua Conover, President, Islesboro Marine Enterprises

- What happens if we don't come to consensus?

Habib Dagher, Ph.D., P.E., University of Maine College of Engineering

- How do we trust one another, on all sides, to seize this opportunity?

Dennis Damon, Maine Port Authority

- Can we expect to continue to generate sufficient electricity/power with fossil fuels?

Eliza Donoghue, Director of Advocacy & Staff Attorney, Maine Audubon

- What is the ecological value of Sears Island and the surrounding area, in the local and regional context? Audubon can offer resources to gather that data.

Francis Eanes, Director, Maine Labor Climate Council

- How can we ensure the appropriate investment is made in workforce development and job growth that is proportional to this substantial public investment?

James Guerrette, Citizen, Town of Searsport

- Not present

David Gelinias, Capt., Penobscot Bay & River Pilots Association

- Is Maine going to miss this opportunity to be a leader in OSW?

Jessie Gunther, Retired Judge, Public At-Large Member

- No question

Ben Lucas, Government Relations Specialist, Maine Chamber of Commerce

- What is the history of Sears Island and the conservation agreement? What are the challenges facing the Sears Island site?

Sean Mahoney, Executive Vice President, Conservation Law Foundation



- Will we be able to listen and respect each other throughout the process and take advantage of OSW, realizing the environmental and economic benefits?

Matt Marks, Chief Executive Officer, Associated General Contractors of Maine

- What does this group consider to be success?

Paul Mercer, Consultant to Governor's Office

- What do you hope your children and grandchildren are doing in 25 years?

Steve Miller, Executive Director, Islesboro Islands Trust

- Why are we still talking about Sears Island when Mack Point has not been exhausted?

Rolf Olsen, Vice President, Friends of Sears Island

- How do we evaluate the potential loss of ecological and economic value of Sears Island?

Mac Smith, Town Manager, Town of Stockton Springs

- Not present

Jim Therriault, Vice President, Sprague Energy

- Does anyone want to go on a field trip? Mr. Therriault invited members to Mack Point to see Sprague offload wind turbine components on Thursday, June 2, 10 AM to noon.

3. Advisory Group Purpose and Program

B. Plumpton charged the Advisory Group with its purpose, reviewed member and co-chair responsibilities, described the meeting procedures, and overviewed planned meetings for 2022.

He noted that the Advisory Group:

- Is charged to advise the State on its planning and selection of a port to support commercial scale OSW energy production.
 - Members will be presented with information about the NEPA planning process as the regulatory framework for port planning.
 - Members will be asked to discuss topics presented to the Advisory Group and provide constructive comments that explain the reason for the comment.
- Is a diverse group of stakeholders by design.
- Has responsibilities to one another.
 - Members should expect and respect differences of opinion.
 - Members should provide equal opportunity to share information and perspectives with the State and Advisory Group members.
 - Members should attend meetings as often as possible; notify co-chairs B. Ahern and/or J. Gillway if unable to attend a meeting, and to request a briefing after a missed meeting.
- Has responsibilities to relay information to represented organizations and associations.



- Members should share meeting summaries and the State’s progress in this planning process.
- Has co-chairs who are responsible for monitoring the content, pace, and clarity of information for productive working meetings. Advisory Group members should communicate with them:
 - If other issues are relevant to the meeting agenda or meeting series.
 - If information is unclear or disconnected, too much, too fast, or too slow.

B. Plumpton explained that the Advisory Group will meet approximately three more times in 2022 – anticipated in July, September, and November/December. Beyond 2022, MaineDOT’s work will be more technical in nature, specially focused on the NEPA process and permitting. It will include agency coordination, public involvement, preliminary design, and the preparation of permit applications. Potential OSWPAG meetings beyond 2022 to report on the State’s NEPA activities and permit application milestones are yet to be determined with OSWPAG input.

Comments, Questions, and Discussion

- S. Miller noted that page 2 of the Program stated: “... these [OSWPAG meetings] summaries will provide a detailed record of the logical and open process that was planned and conducted leading to the identification of a preferred wind port location for the offshore wind industry in Maine.” How, who, and when will the decision regarding the port location be made?
- Becky Bartovics (Sierra Club Maine) offered to lead a tour, or field trip, of Sears Island for Advisory Group members.
- Dr. Dagher offered to lead a tour with the OSWPAG of the Offshore Wind Laboratory at the University of Maine.
- R. Olson asked whether the OSWPAG members will be given the documents that were prepared by the joint use planning committee. *Note: These documents are posted on the OSWPAG website under Additional Project Information. (See website link at the bottom of the page.)*
- S. Miller noted frequent references to “cost” and “economic viability” in the State of Maine’s Offshore Wind Roadmap (available at www.maineoffshorewind.org/road-map/) and states that cost is critical in port siting decisions. What if investors are slow to come around?
- S. Mahoney asked that the Advisory Group be mindful of the scope of the offshore wind port, to not plod the same ground as other groups and communities. The scope, as S. Mahoney understands it, is to focus on the pros and cons of an OSW port [at any of the alternative locations].
- Dr. Dagher agreed with S. Mahoney’s remarks and stated that there is a compelling need for an OSW port in Maine.



4. Offshore Wind (OSW) Port Planning and Project Development Processes

B. Plumpton presented a high-level summary of the National Environment Policy Act (NEPA) and the process for complying with it, as the overarching regulatory framework directing the State's port planning and decision-making processes. His presentation emphasized that the framework for complying with NEPA is intended to lead to a decision that balances the needs and opportunities of present and future generations with the natural environment.

See [NEPA Compliance Presentation](#).pdf on the OSWPAG website.

Comments, Questions, and Discussion

- R. Olson asked whether tribal coordination would be required, noting there are no indigenous peoples and parties represented on the Advisory Group.
 - B. Plumpton responded that, yes, coordination with federally recognized tribes will be required during project development in accordance with federal policies and laws. Coordination with federally recognized tribal governments must be undertaken by equivalent federal government agencies in government-to-government consultation. The Advisory Group is not an appropriate body for such consultation.
- J. Gunther asked whether the Advisory Group is starting with the assumption that OSW will occur. The No-Build Alternative, in this case, does not mean the OSW industry does not develop. The Advisory Group is evaluating the siting of the OSW port.
 - B. Plumpton replied that was correct.
- F. Eanes asked for clarity and context on Maine's Three Port Strategy.
 - Matt Burns replied that it is a State policy and economic strategy to focus port infrastructure investments and will be discussed later in the meeting.
- S. Miller asked how the Advisory Group will contribute to alternative development.
 - B. Plumpton remarked that the State will ask for advice on the alternative locations for the port. The alternatives must be reviewed by the public. Following public review, the State must take into consideration public comments before announcing a preferred alternative.
- S. Mahoney stated that NEPA applies to major federal actions. In the absence of a major federal action, State environmental review laws prevail.

5. Interview Findings

Michelle Brummer of Gannett Fleming, Inc. highlighted common themes and findings from the planning team's interviews with Advisory Group members. She emphasized that the interviews were intended to get to know the member by asking about their knowledge and opinions related to OSW energy and port planning. Key themes included:

- Members' professional backgrounds and represented organizations reflect diversity across economic, environmental, and social values.
- Maine's ports have varied functions based on their land and water characteristics.



- Members' organizations have a common interest combatting climate through increased production and use of clean, renewable energy.
- Member's knowledge of OSW technology, the emerging industry, and Maine's Offshore Wind Roadmap varies.
- Members are interested to learn how the industry will locate OSW farms; what public infrastructure the industry will use; and what improvements to existing infrastructure or additional infrastructure will be needed.
- Members want to see all ports fairly considered for OSW port selection.
- Members want to understand OSW port operations and impacts to communities, economies, and the environment.
- Members understand that the positive and negative impacts of development can be complex.
- Members expect the OSW port planning and development process to be thorough and transparent.

See Interview Findings.pdf on the OSWPAG website for the full report.

Comments, Questions, and Discussion

B. Ahearn thanked M. Brummer and the planning for their time to meet each member and listen for common and unique perspectives on OSW and the planning process ahead.

There were no further comments or discussion on this topic.

6. Need and Purpose for an Offshore Wind (OSW) Port in Maine

Matt Burns, Executive Director of the Maine Port Authority, presented information on Maine's Offshore Wind Port Development. Key themes included:

- Maine has been supporting OSW through policy and legislation, partnerships to advance floating technology concepts, and planning (i.e., Maine's Offshore Wind Roadmap and working groups).
- Maine's climate and clean energy targets aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and expand the renewable energy portfolio.
- Maine is pursuing OSW to:
 - Combat climate change.
 - Foster economic growth.
 - Leverage the State's manufacturing capabilities.
- A port is needed to construct floating foundations and assemble the very large components of offshore wind turbines (e.g., 850 feet tall, 720 feet in diameter, for commercial scale industry).
- There are no purpose-built OSW port facilities; there are only a few OSW pilot projects. Port design and operational requirements have been outlined.

See [Presentation](#).pdf on the OSWPAG website.



Comments, Questions, and Discussion

- S. Mahoney asked whether air draft in the context of port development was referring to overhead transmission (opposed to burying cable) or the route to sea.
 - M. Burns replied that air draft referred to above-water interference (e.g., bridge) with ships traveling to sea. It is likely that cables would be buried at the port and would have to be coordinated with port operations to avoid conflicts.
- E. Donahue asked about the relationship of the OSW port to the Research Array.
 - M. Burns replied that 12 turbines would have to be built at some port facility to achieve the Research Array. Doing so at a single port facility would be more cost effective, more efficient, and safer.
- S. Miller remarked that because OSW port development will be market driven, there will be some uncertainty about phasing and/or timing of development. If investors backed away, would the State operate and maintain the port?
 - M. Burns repeated the question: what if we have a pathway to build this port and investors back away? M. Burns stated that a facility like this would not be constructed without a good business cause. The State has ambitious energy goals, willing partners, and a business plan. The State will lead port development and construction and operation of the port. If needed, the State could hire an entity to operate and maintain the port.
- J. Conover asked two questions: (1) how OSW turbine power output compares to the decommissioned Maine Yankee Nuclear Power Plant and (2) what is the total power output potential in the Gulf of Maine?
 - M. Burns remarked that the intent of the port would be to support commercial development in the Gulf of Maine, and beyond (e.g., export potential).
 - Dr. Dagher replied that there is new OSW turbine technology being developed in Europe generating 1 gigawatt (GW) of power, which is equivalent to the Maine Yankee Nuclear Power Plant. The capacity in the Gulf of Maine is approximately 150 GW within 50 nautical miles (nm) of the coast.
 - S. Mahoney remarked that New England needs about 24-34 GW of power a day and that the need for power generation far outstrips what is on the ground today.
- B. Lucas remarked that the Maine Chamber of Commerce is receiving great interest from industries relative to OSW, noting there is general eagerness from private investors. The more the State can do to “open doors” to investment the better.
- M. Cannon asked what are the costs associated with towing and not having a port in one place? What are the costs of hardening (i.e., increasing the quayside or upland load rating) existing ports? Further, some sort of visual (graphic) timeline for State and Federal permitting would be helpful for the OSWPAG.
 - M. Burns replied that he could not answer all these questions right now, but that, in general, it is very costly to retrofit a port to increase the “punch load” (i.e., the pounds per square foot load rating).



- F. Eanes stated that a master timeline, inclusive of construction and operations in addition to the various other OSW initiatives currently being developed in Maine would be useful for the OSWPAG.
 - M. Burns replied that generally permitting is 1 year or more and construction is 2 years or more. However, much remains unknown about the port timeline currently.
- Dr. Dagher added that the costs associated with the ship and tow without a local port is extremely costly, and not feasible.
- E. Donahue requested that the master timeline include information about multiple scenarios (e.g., one port vs. multiple ports) and phasing.

7. Public Comment

There will be opportunity for public comment at all Advisory Group meetings. Comments may be submitted as verbal statements spoken at the meeting or written statements submitted via meeting comment forms or the OSWPAG website.

- Sabrina DeTurk stated a concern for the composition of the OSWPAG because there is no representation from local small businesses noting offshore wind port development would impact tourism and business.

There were no written public comments submitted at the meeting.

8. Closing and Adjournment

B. Plumpton noted that the two presentations, interview summary, and meeting summary will be posted to the OSWPAG website.

Bruce A. Van Note, Commissioner of MaineDOT, concluded by stating that the market outlook for OSW is relevant to the Offshore Wind Roadmap but beyond the scope of this Advisory Group. Maine's Three Port Strategy provides guidance but is not limiting to OSW port planning. The Sears Island Planning Initiative and associated documents are important for the Advisory Group to understand and discuss.