

MARINE PLANNING UPDATE

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) considers marine planning issues annually at its March meeting. Significant activities occurred during 2020, including progress on identifying Aquaculture Opportunity Areas (AOA) by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and efforts to identify potential offshore wind energy sites by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM). Representatives from both agencies are scheduled to give presentations to the Council's Habitat Committee (HC) and other advisory bodies during a February 24th online HC meeting, and will provide an overview to the Council at the March meeting. The HC has commented on offshore renewable energy and aquaculture in the past, including a September 2020 supplemental [report](#) and a November 2020 supplemental [report](#).

[Executive Order \(EO\) 13921](#): Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth was issued in May 2020, and included a directive to NOAA to identify two AOA by May 2021 and prepare Programmatic Environmental Impact Statements (PEIS) for each, to be completed by 2023. NOAA identified Southern California as one of these two initial geographic areas for an AOA. The Gulf of Mexico is the other geographic area being analyzed for an AOA at this time. Analysis of additional geographic areas to consider for future AOAs will be conducted over five years, resulting in a total of 10 AOAs nationwide (including Alaska and Hawaii). NOAA's efforts have included public outreach to, and numerous meetings with fishing communities, states, tribes, and Federal agencies, including but not limited to public listening sessions, a *Federal Register* Notice of a Request for Information and request for comments. The Council responded to the request with a December 2020 [letter](#). That letter emphasized protection of essential fish habitat (EFH), protecting commercial and recreational fisheries, and a precautionary approach to establishing AOAs. In addition to outreach efforts, NOAA is analyzing various spatial data to identify areas most suitable for further evaluation in the PEIS for the Southern California (and Gulf of Mexico) AOAs. Additional information on NOAA AOAs can be found [here](#).

BOEM has also conducted substantial outreach efforts to identify areas potentially suitable for offshore wind development. These efforts have included public, agency, and tribal outreach, as well as informal coordination calls with the Council Executive Director and staff and presentations to the Council's HC. BOEM delineated three geographically distinct areas offshore California for potential leasing ([northern California](#) and [central California](#)) in consultation with several parties, including the Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force established at the request of the State of California. A [summary of outreach efforts in California](#) is available on the BOEM website. In Oregon, BOEM has commenced offshore wind energy planning with data gathering and stakeholder engagement (see [factsheet](#)). BOEM is collaborating with its state partners to provide accurate and comprehensive data to support decision making utilizing the [Data Basin portal](#) and the Oregon Offshore Wind Mapping Tool ([OROWindMap](#)) for California and Oregon planning, respectively.

Included in background materials are a memo from the Office of the Solicitor of the United States Department of the Interior (Agenda Item C.2 Attachment 1), and a Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife report that provides an overview of Washington’s marine spatial plan (Agenda Item C.2.a WDFW Report 1).

At this meeting, representatives from NOAA and BOEM will summarize information provided at the February 24th HC online meeting, and will be available for Council questions and discussion. The Council should provide feedback to NOAA and BOEM, and should consider opportunities to comment on upcoming activities related to offshore aquaculture and energy development.

Council Action:

Consider presentations from NOAA and BOEM and provide recommendations and guidance as appropriate.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item C.2 Attachment 1: Memorandum of the DOI Office of the Solicitor (*Electronic Only*).
2. Agenda Item C.2.a, WDFW Report 1 (*Electronic Only*).
3. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

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| C.2 Marine Planning Update | Kerry Griffin |
| a. Update on National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Aquaculture Opportunity Area Mapping | James Morris |
| b. Update on Bureau of Ocean Energy Management Offshore Wind Energy Siting and Mapping | Necy Sumait |
| c. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies | |
| d. Public Comment | |
| e. Council Discussion | |

PFMC
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