

Joint Ad Hoc Marine Planning Committee of the Pacific Fishery Management Council and Bureau of Ocean Energy Management Meeting Summary

March 4, 2022

Purpose

On March 4, 2022, the Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Pacific Council) Ad Hoc Marine Planning Committee (MPC) held a joint online work session with the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM). The purpose of this meeting was to discuss BOEM's next steps in their authorization process for commercial offshore wind energy leasing, including a description of proposed offshore wind planning Call Area(s) off the Oregon Coast and to solicit public feedback. The meeting was open to the public, including all interested parties with a primary audience focus of fishery sector stakeholders who operate in Oregon.

MPC Administrative Matters

The meeting opened with introductions, announcements and an overview of the agenda and meeting logistics. Opening remarks were provided by Mike Conroy, Susan Chambers, Merrick Burden, and Doug Boren.

Mike Conroy, MPC co-chair, welcomed the attendees to the meeting and acknowledged the importance of the meeting given the size of the proposed areas and the potential impacts to fisheries, habitats, and the ecosystem.

Susan Chambers, MPC co-chair, thanked the attendees for their attendance and highlighted the importance of hearing from interested fishermen and processors in the discussion. Both Mike and Susan shared hope for meaningful discussion throughout the meeting.

Merrick Burden, Pacific Council Executive Director, reiterated the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the recently announced Oregon Call Areas. Merrick thanked BOEM for their participation in the meeting and for working with the Pacific Council. Merrick noted the meeting is an official MPC meeting, and shared background on the development of the Committee. He concluded his remarks by explaining the Pacific Council's role in the meeting is facilitate information flow and discussion, and they intend to provide comments to BOEM at another future opportunity.

Doug Boren, BOEM Pacific Regional Director, welcomed the attendees to the meeting and shared gratitude towards Mike, Susan, and others at the Pacific Council for working with BOEM to strengthen opportunities for fisheries input. Doug explained BOEM's mission, which includes overseeing offshore wind energy leasing. Doug emphasized BOEM looks forward to increased focused discussions with ocean users, with the goal of ocean uses to co-exist and thrive.

BOEM Oregon Offshore Wind Energy Planning and Leasing Process

Whitney Hauer, Renewable Energy Specialist, presented on BOEM's Oregon offshore wind energy planning and leasing process. She provided background information on the Oregon Intergovernmental

Renewable Energy Task Force and of the events regarding Oregon offshore wind energy planning beginning in late 2019 to the present. She also provided information on BOEM's authorization process timeline and explained that Oregon is in the first planning and analysis phase of the timeline. Whitney explained the difference between a Call for Information and Nominations (Call) and a Wind Energy Area (WEA). She then presented on Oregon's proposed Call Area(s) off Coos Bay, Bandon, and Brookings and explained BOEM is considering the following within the areas: wind resource and cost of energy, transmission, depth and slope, existing submarine cables, marine mammals, sea turtles, marine birds, rock reef habitat, submerged landforms, Tribal input, vessel traffic, and fishing.

Frank Pendleton, GIS Analyst, presented details on the fishing and vessel traffic considerations. He presented maps and explained how they were created. Frank presented the data vessel monitoring system data and other available datasets for Dungeness crab, Pink Shrimp, Sablefish, Pacific whiting, Albacore tuna, and Chinook salmon.

Whitney, BOEM, provided a summary of BOEM's guiding principles and proposed Call Area(s) and then presented the proposed schedule moving forward. She explained BOEM plans to issue the Call in the *Federal Register* in March/April 2022 and noted that engagement with the fishing community will continue after issuance of the Call. Potential fishing sector meetings may occur in April-May 2022 for Pacific whiting, Pink Shrimp and Groundfish trawl, Dungeness crab, Salmon and Tuna, with the addition of one catch-all meeting.

[OROWindMap Presentation](#)

Andy Lanier, Department of Land Conservation and Development Marine Affairs Coordinator, provided information on the Oregon Ocean Data Catalog and updates of the Oregon Offshore Wind Mapping (OROWindMap) Tool. Andy walked through the updates of the offshore wind data visualization tool and data catalog and highlighted the new data layers added to the tool since October 2021. These new data layers include marine mammals, fishing and VMS information, the Groundfish Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) synthesis process which occurred in 2013, and BOEM's planning and proposed Call Area(s).

[Questions/Discussion and Public Comment Themes](#)

Kerry Griffin, Pacific Council staff, facilitated questions, discussion, and public comment from MPC members and the public. Below are highlighted common themes from both the question and discussion session and public comment between MPC members, the public, and BOEM staff.

Data and Metrics

- Regarding the fisheries dataset's presentation, an attendee shared it is unclear which specific datasets are being used and which agencies the datasets are sourced from.
- A few attendees sought understanding of the metrics BOEM used on their decision to place all the Call Area(s) off south central and southern Oregon. An attendee noted it appears BOEM only considered the cost effectiveness of wind energy, rather than finding areas of least impact. Attendees inquired why metrics are not made available to the public; stakeholders want to know how their information is being shared and used by decision-makers, and who the decisions makers are.
 - *Response:* BOEM's presentation included the approach taken in delineating the Call Areas. BOEM explained they must balance several factors and there are no specific thresholds set with metrics.

- An attendee inquired how BOEM trusts the lessee to provide accurate and rigorous data collection surveys.
 - *Response:* BOEM explained they have a rigorous review process which includes guidelines and regulations on survey requirements.
- A commenter inquired why BOEM chose the date range for the data and evaluation of fisheries instead of using more recent dates or longer date ranges that would reflect the current monetary valuation of catch species. Current and longer datasets may also show accurate migration patterns and stock variations.
 - *Response:* BOEM explained that further economic analysis will be conducted but the purpose was to identify high value fisheries to show available datasets regarding the areas of those fisheries.
- A commenter noted that most vessels that fish for salmon do not have AIS or VMS therefore the data is skewed.
- Commercial fishermen are concerned with the designated Call Areas and noted that more data is needed to inform these areas, and should be considered before making leasing decisions.

Call Area(s) Size and Capacity

- Attendees noted the total area BOEM is looking for/needing to produce up to 3 GW of energy moving into the WEA stage is unclear. It was recommended that BOEM present a more realistic capacity than an area representing 17 GW of energy.
 - *Response:* BOEM explained that the Call Areas are larger than what would be needed for 3 GW. Additional information from comments and additional engagement will inform the size of WEAs for environmental review.
- An attendee inquired if the size of the Call Area can be increased.
 - *Response:* BOEM explained they do not make a Wind Energy Area larger or outside of a Call Area. BOEM practice is to designate Wind Energy Areas in areas that were previously included in a Call.
- Attendees shared a lack of trust that the Oregon Call Area(s) will be further winnowed down, as that did not occur for the Humboldt Call Area in CA.

Concerns for Ratepayers

- An attendee noted the South Coast lacks the infrastructure to receive 3GW of power. There is concern that the ratepayers will have to support transmission upgrades in order to support additional capacity.

Bandon High Spot

- Several attendees commented on the Bandon High Spot as critical and important to fishing. Attendees suggested to remove the Bandon Call Area. Commenters noted the presence of the EFH conservation area with a minimum of 25% rocky reef habitat within the Bandon Call Area. This area contains pristine ecosystems and a very steep slope.
 - *Response:* Comment was acknowledged and helpful; the proposed areas avoid some rock reef habitat but after the Call is issued, we expect as we move to the further stage in the process, BOEM will acknowledge comments we heard and explain in the decision of the Wind Energy Area of whether to exclude it or not.

Fishing Effort and Research Survey Shift

- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries Science Centers have survey transect lines that run through the proposed Call Area(s). An attendee shared that surveys establish a baseline which helps fisheries understand the state of the environment. The surveys produce important data points that inform stock assessment reports and losing stock survey access introduces a gap in data and uncertainty. Uncertainty in stock assessments result in decreased catch/opportunity to account for the uncertainty.
 - *Response:* BOEM is coordinating with NMFS on the issue of surveys, and noted that NMFS provided a comment letter with some information on survey areas in Oregon.
- Concerns were shared regarding shift in research surveys and fishing efforts. The displacement of groundfish and whiting/trawl will affect shoreside processors. An attendee reflected no consideration has been given to shoreside processors and seafood infrastructure.

Cumulative Impacts Concerns

- Concern was shared regarding the cumulative impacts offshore wind energy sites will have on the California Current's upwelling. The CA Current is critical for the migration of forage fish, marine mammals, target species, and more.
- Concern was shared by an attendee on the impacts to forage species (anchovies and sardines) and the subsequent impacts to forager species.
 - *Response:* BOEM noted that this comment has been received in recent past engagement efforts, and it is currently reviewing literature to assess the need for further investigation.
- An attendee inquired how BOEM will consider the effects of climate change and ocean acidification on commercial fisheries, birds, and other marine mammal species.
 - *Response:* BOEM explained that climate change and related ocean acidification are always considered as part of the dynamic baseline in the Environmental Setting portions of Environmental Impact Statements.

Impacts to Fisheries and Fishing Communities

- Concerns for the Pacific whiting industry were shared. Attendees emphasized the fishing industry supports thousands of year-round jobs and rural coastal communities.
- Attendees commented how the seafood and fishing industry are comprised of essential workers who contribute significantly to overall seafood production in the nation.
- Concern was shared regarding food security; an attendee acknowledged the role of commercial fisheries securing the resiliency of the food system.
- An attendee emphasized to BOEM that the fishing industry is increasingly constricted, and it cannot sustain much more damage and expect to be a viable industry.
- Several commenters shared that the areas within the proposed Call Area(s) have been fished for decades. The fishing industry is composed of historical users and stewards of the ocean.
- An attendee shared their fishing grounds consist of up to 90% of the proposed Call Area(s) thus emphasized the importance of preserving access to catch groundfish.
- Concern was shared by many on the potential permanent change or impacts on fishermen livelihoods and fishing communities.

- An attendee commented the tourism industry must be considered and that commercial fishing is a draw for tourism.

Support for Programmatic EIS

- There were several comments on and support for a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) prior to a WEA or leasing.
 - *Response:* BOEM explained their process is phased and set up to have lessees in place. The lessees are required to collect site characterization data to inform their Construction and Operations Plan (COP) for BOEM's review. The present scope of environmental review for the action of lease issuance is largely directed to site assessment and characterization. Based on experience, BOEM has not found significant environmental impacts within the scope the EAs and thus concludes that an EIS would not provide more information. Presently, BOEM is not considering a programmatic EIS.
- Attendees requested for BOEM to delay their timeline between now and lease auctions to allow for increased outreach and public comment periods. Significant attention and time are needed to resolve existing issues and minimize impacts on fisheries.
 - *Response:* BOEM explained the timeline has flexibilities and there is potential to allow for more time for public comment and collaboration.

Engagement

- Support was shared by an attendee for BOEM to partner with the fishing industry through the establishment of working groups with the goal to minimize impacts to environmental and existing oceans users.
- Several commenters stated the fishing industry needs a seat at the table in this process.
- Attendees commented that the proposed Call Areas do not reflect open and meaningful dialogue, otherwise certain areas would not have been selected from the onset.
- Attendees shared disappointment with the engagement and decision-making process thus far.
- Regarding meaningful engagement and open dialogue an attendee commented that engagement differs from public involvement in that true stakeholder engagement facilitates the ability and willingness for stakeholders to take an active role in issues that affects them or their livelihoods.
- Commenters stated that BOEM should actively seek input from stakeholders via meaningful engagement in which their concerns are captured, and where applicable, identified when BOEM makes changes based upon that engagement.
- A commenter suggested BOEM hosts meetings coastwide if engaging fisheries or other ocean users.
- An attendee sought further explanation of BOEM's commitment to engagement. They suggested BOEM to refer to the BOEM-funded 2012 space-use conflicts study (<https://espis.boem.gov/final%20reports/5203.pdf>) detailing engagement with fisheries.

Wrap up and Next Steps

Kerry Griffin reminded the audience of the upcoming Pacific Council's meeting beginning March 8, 2022 and noted marine planning is on the agenda (March 11, 2022). He noted that today's meeting recording will be uploaded to the Pacific Council webpage.

Necy Sumait, Regional Supervisor, provided closing remarks. She thanked the group for their time, participation, and for the informative discussion. Necy noted BOEM is continuing to look for data and hold meaningful outreach. She explained BOEM's work is just beginning for this process and the proposed Call Area(s) reflect where the available data took BOEM, and acknowledged that the areas do still reveal conflict. BOEM is hoping to gather more data and information to further refine the areas. Necy commented on how helpful the Pacific Council has been in helping guide conversations between BOEM and fisheries, and BOEM hopes for the Pacific Council's help in formulating a plan for moving continued engagement forward to inform the next phases of offshore wind energy planning in Oregon.

Mike Conroy and Susan Chambers, MPC co-chairs, provided closing remarks and shared gratitude for everyone's time and participation on the call.

Meeting adjourned at 5:40 pm PT