

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON MARINE PLANNING

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) reviewed Briefing Book materials related to this agenda item and received a summary of the recent Marine Planning Committee (MPC) meeting from Mr. Kerry Griffin (Council staff) and Ms. Susan Chambers (MPC co-chair). The GAP appreciates the extensive review provided by the MPC on several topic areas, which are detailed in [Supplemental MPC Report 1](#). The GAP supports all of the recommendations made by the MPC in their report.

In addition to the information provided by the MPC, the Council should be aware of recent activities by fishing industry participants, coastal communities, state legislators, and the tribes related to offshore wind (OSW) development. These activities have included [public listening sessions with Oregon state legislators](#); development of port and coastal community resolutions documenting concerns about OSW and effects on fisheries, fishing communities, and the marine environment; and expression of tribal concerns about OSW and effects on Treaty fishing access, rights, and resources.

Public engagement efforts related to the proposed Oregon call areas are being led by Ms. Heather Mann (Midwater Trawlers Cooperative, MTC) in coordination with Ms. Lori Steele (West Coast Seafood Processors Association), Ms. Yelena Nowak (Oregon Trawl Commission), Mr. Dan Waldeck (Pacific Whiting Conservation Cooperative), and many others. The common message is that OSW will severely and negatively impact Pacific coast fisheries, fishing-dependent communities, critically important fisheries science, and the marine environment. The request is for the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) to slow down the OSW development process because public engagement needs to be meaningful, and environmental and economic analyses are needed *prior* to definition of Call Areas and certainly before wind energy areas are identified and leases are requested.

Again, focusing on new information that the Council should be aware of, the [MTC website](#) provides access to digital versions of letters and resolutions from local, state, and tribal governments to BOEM. These documents express reservations about the current BOEM process for developing OSW and concerns about impacts to fisheries and coastal communities. Moreover, the GAP understands that other local communities and municipalities will take up similar resolutions in advance of the June 28th Oregon Call Area public comment deadline.

- [Oregon Coastal Caucus](#) (a bipartisan group of legislators that represent coastal districts): “Slow down the process to better understand the risks and uncertainties to the ecosystem, economics and coastal communities. Over six hundred citizens representing the seafood industry, ocean users, environmental groups, and other stakeholders participated in our recent listening sessions. Clearly there is broad interest, and a need to better hear these concerns.”
- [Port of Newport](#): “Enact a moratorium on developing large scale wind turbine farms until all the risks to marine mammals, sea birds, fisheries and the marine environment are clearly understood.”

- [City of Newport](#): “Given the considerable values generated from the Call Areas, the productivity of the California Current System, and the potential impacts to marine species and ecosystems/habitats, the process should be slowed down because of significant risks and uncertainties.”
- [Quinault Indian Nation](#): “The Nation strongly opposes the unsolicited lease request by Trident Winds for a site to develop a floating offshore wind project, Olympic Wind, off the coast of Grays Harbor, Washington. This proposed project will severely impact the Nation’s Treaty fishing access, rights and resources.”
- [Grays Harbor County Board of County Commissioners](#): “The Grays Harbor County Board of County Commissioners opposes the Trident Winds project, Olympic Wind. The Olympic Wind project has submitted an unsolicited lease request to develop a floating wind project off the coast of Grays Harbor, Washington. The Quinault Indian Nation states this project will severely impact the Nation’s Treaty which secures fishing access, certain rights and resources. Equally as important are the many local businesses, employees, and communities that will be adversely affected by the project.”

As further evidence of the need to slow the process down in order to fully understand the range and scope of potential impacts, the GAP highlights National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) findings relative to fisheries science. In their report ([Agenda Item F.1.b, Supplemental NWFSC Report 1, June 2022](#)), NMFS stated: If the West Coast Bottom Trawl Survey was precluded from sampling in Oregon OSW areas, for some species, “we would expect assessment uncertainty to increase throughout much of the existing survey period, with the potential for unpredictable changes in population scale or status.” NMFS further states: “Were the Pacific hake survey to be excluded from the [OSW area], the assessment would suffer a substantial information loss.”

To again highlight common themes – OSW development will have negative impacts, those impacts need to be understood and analyzed, and BOEM should slow down because of these significant risks and uncertainties. Therefore, the GAP recommendation to the Council is simple and straightforward: Please add your voice to this groundswell of concern by clearly articulating to BOEM that you share the concerns expressed by the Council family, and local, state, and tribal government representatives that OSW will harm fisheries, fishing-dependent communities, and the marine environment. The GAP recommends the Council request BOEM slow down the OSW development process because we need to fully understand the potential harm, risks, and uncertainties to Council-managed fisheries and the marine environment now, not later.

PFMC
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