

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON MARINE PLANNING

The Coastal Pelagic Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) heard a report from Mr. Kerry Griffin updating the CPSAS on the latest Marine Planning Committee's (MPC) Report (the Report) submitted to the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) Briefing Book on marine planning prepared for the April 2023 Council meeting. ([Agenda Item F.4.a, MPC Report 1, April 2023](#)).

The CPSAS wishes to thank the MPC members, MPC chairs, the Council, and Council staff for a brief but thorough and professional report on the latest activities and news involving the floating offshore wind energy plans for development in the U.S. West Coast Exclusive Economic Zone in the eastern Pacific. In general, the CPSAS commends and supports the entire MPC Report. We herein highlight several important points in the Report the CPSAS believes the Council and the fishing community should take note of. Additionally, we have posed several questions and recommendations. (Report language is italicized.)

1. *The California leases include stipulations new to BOEM leases, including community benefits agreements (CBAs) and requirements for the lessees to develop three communications plans: 1) Native American Tribes; 2) Agencies; and 3) Fisheries.* The CPSAS believes that if each developer is allowed to create their own CBA and communication plan without standardized rules and oversight, and no Federal enforcement, affected fishermen that fish or had fished in multiple lease areas will be confused and frustrated with the different protocols and unable to seek mediation or other remedial action in cases of dispute.
2. *As the lessees off California prepare to conduct marine site characterization surveys, they will request MMPA incidental take authorizations from NMFS for the take of marine mammals incidental to those survey activities.* How will this be documented and enforced? Will "take" or "harassment" information be made public?
3. *MPC members discussed the Fisheries Communications plans and initial thoughts for planning. After the leases are finalized, Lessees may wish to reach out to the Pacific Council to ask about elements the Council would like to see in the plan and/or the Council could proactively reach out to developers with requests they'd like to see in the plan.* The CPSAS strongly agrees with this proposal.
4. *During the February 23, 2023, MPC meeting, BOEM indicated it was still considering whether to prepare a similar PEIS (Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement) for the five California leases. After discussion, the MPC recommends the Council submit a letter to BOEM asking the agency to prepare such a PEIS. The Council has previously commented on the need for a programmatic approach of offshore wind development off the U.S. West Coast.* There is need for stringent National Environmental Policy Act processes which include cumulative impact analysis to take measure of the total socioeconomic losses that will be endured by many coastal communities when West Coast fisheries are displaced or greatly reduced. There is also need for research, extensive modeling, and independent and professional analysis to determine the ecosystem services damage to productivity wrought by wind wakes, wind deficits, and/or other meteorological or hydrological changes that may impact environmental dynamics such as

upwelling, phytoplankton outputs¹ and forage density shifts which may impact the entire food web as well as dependent upper trophic predators including Endangered Species Act listed and Marine Mammal Protection Act protected species (i.e., humpback whales, Chinook salmon, and short-tailed albatross).

PEISs are not a remedy for individual project EISs, nor can a project EIS fulfill the role of the PEIS. The two are meant to work together in tandem on large scale (tiered) projects to understand the macro and micro impacts to single large environmental units (e.g., California Current Ecosystem, CCE) that may have different dynamics or features that are unique to one or multiple areas but not the entire structure of the ecosystem² (i.e., seamounts). To be effective, the PEIS must be conducted prior to leasing to allow meaningful analysis and understanding of cumulative impacts to community socioeconomics and to the CCE.

5. *Tribes in Oregon and Washington have expressed concerns about how potential ecosystem impacts resulting from offshore wind development will affect tribal fisheries and usual and accustomed (U&A) grounds elsewhere.* As stated in numerous BOEM policy statements, tribal rights and protection of those rights are of paramount importance. The adequacy of present government-to-government consultation should be reviewed and corrective measures taken if present communications are insufficient.

PFMC
04/05/23

¹ Phytoplankton and algae form the bases of aquatic food webs: <https://www.noaa.gov/education/resource-collections/marine-life/aquatic-food-webs>

² The goal of this guidance is to encourage a more consistent approach to programmatic NEPA reviews so that the analyses and documentation will allow for the expeditious and efficient completion of any necessary tiered reviews. It builds on previous guidance that explained the use of tiering and its place in the NEPA process: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2014/12/23/2014-30034/final-guidance-for-effective-use-of-programmatic-nepa-reviews>