

MARINE PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT ON MARINE PLANNING ISSUES

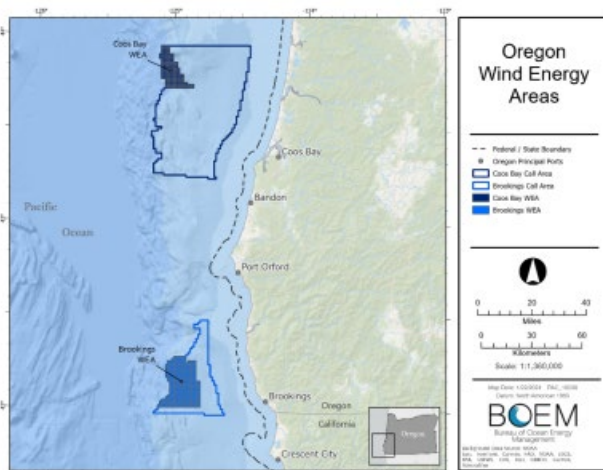
The Pacific Fishery Management Council’s (Council) Marine Planning Committee (MPC) met online February 20, 2024, to discuss items relevant to both the March and April Council meetings. The MPC will be submitting an informational report for the Council’s April Briefing Book, as Marine Planning is not on the Council’s agenda. This supplemental report discusses items that arose or were further developed after the advanced Briefing Book deadline.

The MPC seeks Council guidance on:

1. Draft comment letter responding to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management’s (BOEM) Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Assessment for offshore wind (OSW) energy leasing offshore Oregon, related to the issuance of Final Wind Energy Areas (WEAs).
2. Potential comment letter on the California Energy Commission’s (CEC) Assembly Bill 525 (AB 525) Draft Strategic Plan for Offshore Wind Development.
3. Guidance on a potential coastwide, long term, cumulative effects analysis for the future of offshore wind on the Pacific Coast.

Oregon Final Wind Energy Areas and Notice of Intent

On February 13, BOEM announced the designation of two final WEAs offshore Oregon. The announcement was accompanied by an [Area Identification Memo](#) that provided BOEM’s rationale. The Coos Bay WEA is 61,204 acres and is located 32 miles from shore. The Brookings WEA is 133,808 acres and is about 18 miles from shore.



On February 14, BOEM published [Notice of Intent](#) (NOI) To Prepare an Environmental Assessment for Commercial Wind Leasing and Site Assessment Activities on the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf Offshore Oregon. The 30-day comment period ends March 15, 2024, and a draft comment letter for Council consideration is included as E.3, Supplemental Attachment 1. The MPC **recommends** that the Council submit the comment letter, with edits as appropriate, per Council guidance.

California Energy Commission's AB 525 Draft Strategic Plan for Offshore Wind Development (Draft Plan)

Agenda Item E.3.a, MPC Report 1 advises the Council of the availability of the Draft Plan. During its February 20 meeting, the MPC discussed the following chapters of the Draft Plan that may be of interest to the Council, listed in order of perceived priority:

- Chapter 5 – Identification of suitable sea space
- Chapter 4 - Potential Impacts of OSW and Avoidance/Minimization/Mitigation Strategies
- Chapter 8 - Transmission Technology and Alternatives Assessment (to shore)
- Chapter 6 - Port and Waterfront Infrastructure

The CEC currently has a comment deadline of March 22. The CEC has scheduled a [March 20 Workshop](#) on the Draft AB 525 Strategic Plan for Offshore Wind off the Coast of California in Federal Waters. It is likely the comment deadline will be extended and we expect to be able to share the revised deadline on March 8. The MPC has begun drafting a comment letter for Council consideration, between the March and April meetings. It will likely incorporate many of the concerns and recommendations contained in the Council's February 20, 2024 [comment letter](#) on the NOI to Prepare a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the five leases off California. The MPC **recommends** that the Council task the MPC and Habitat Committee with developing a comment letter on the Draft Plan for submission to the CEC.

Future coast-wide offshore wind energy development - A consideration of scale, long term impacts (coast-wide and discrete), uncertainties and necessary knowledge.

During the November 2023 Council meeting, the MPC proposed the development of a high-level framework document for identifying key issues and potential impacts and describing an approach to address the information gaps needed to inform Council comments and recommendations around the appropriate siting and development of OSW development scenarios and their associated cumulative impacts to the resources and communities within the Council's purview.

The MPC had a detailed discussion about this document; its purpose, how it would serve the Council, development scenarios, how it complements parallel processes, and how to best frame the document.

- *Purpose.* To support and develop a framework for a comprehensive cumulative impacts analysis for offshore wind development at a regional scale, under different scenarios and timelines, which address the potential short and long-term impacts to natural resources, habitats, fisheries, and communities.
- *How it would serve the Council.* It would serve as a resource for the Council that can be called upon during the different stages in the BOEM process to assist in Council consideration of OSW development. It would also be a centralized repository of information, data gaps, information needs, etc., and could serve as a reference by the Council and other entities (e.g., West Coast Ocean Alliance, state/federal agencies, or academia) in developing research proposals, comments, and recommendations as needed.
- *Development scenarios.* California has five active leases with a planned capacity of between 4.5 and 5 GW. California also has a long-term planning goal of 25 GW of OSW production by 2045. Oregon has a goal of up to 3 GW. Washington has not announced a

specific target or goal; but the unsolicited lease requests in waters off the Washington coast would generate roughly 4 GW. These scenarios serve as a starting point for planning for potential OSW development.

- *Parallel processes.* This document could connect the work underway to inform the [California Current Integrated Ecosystem Assessment status report \(CCIEA\)](#) with the Council's need for information to inform OSW development decisions. (See below)
- *Framing the document.* Different perspectives were shared on how to best present information within the document as it is further developed. The MPC will continue to discuss this as additional content is added and the document matures.

NOAA's 2023-2024 CCIEA Report includes six broad-scale ecosystem indicators that could be used to track potential ecosystem impacts across all stages of OSW development (see pages 31-32, and Appendix Q). The MPC received a presentation about these indicators from Kelly Andrews (Northwest Fisheries Science Center), as well as a brief introduction to George Waters, Director of the Southwest Fisheries Science Center's new Ecosystem Science Division, which is planning a long-term monitoring program to assess the effects of OSW on the pelagic upwelling ecosystem. The MPC notes that these efforts to identify the indicators and ecosystem features to monitor are very much in line with the cumulative impacts scenario idea we describe here. For instance, models of the OSW development scenarios would likely be built to make projections using the same indicators and features. The MPC hopes to explore the connections between the CCIEA and other National Marine Fisheries Service efforts on OSW energy impacts and opportunities to advance the cumulative impacts analysis discussed here.

The MPC **recommends** the Council consider the magnitude of such an endeavor and what federal and state agencies, as well as other potential principals, would be involved. The MPC is prepared to continue developing a framework for guiding this effort.

OSW Site Survey and Assessments

At its February 20 meeting, the MPC received overviews from three OSW lease holders: Canopy Wind off Humboldt Bay, and Equinor and Golden State Wind off Morro Bay. All three lessees are intending to begin site survey work soon, and the MPC will provide more detail in its April informational report. Agenda Item E.3, Supplemental Attachment 2 is a flyer from AXYS Technologies, providing information on data collection plans offshore Humboldt Bay.

PFMC
02/27/24