

MARINE PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT ON MARINE PLANNING ISSUES

The Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) Marine Planning Committee (MPC) met online October 9, 2024, for updates and discussion on several topics and to prepare a report for Council consideration. The meeting agenda, materials, and recording can be found on the meeting [webpage](#). This report summarizes the presentations from that meeting and provides additional information.

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) Update

BOEM representatives Necy Sumait and Rick Yarde provided several updates and answered questions. BOEM discussed the [September 27 postponement](#) of the offshore wind energy auction planned for lease areas off Oregon due to insufficient bidder interest. This will give the State of Oregon time to develop its Offshore Wind Roadmap, expected in fall 2025.

BOEM also indicated it is still looking at mid-November for publication of a Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement to analyze the potential impacts of, and mitigation strategies/measures for, floating offshore wind (OSW) energy development on the five leased areas off Humboldt and Morro Bays, California. BOEM published a Notice of Intent (NOI) in December 2023 and the Council submitted a [Comment Letter](#) in response to the NOI.

BOEM was also asked about the status of the [Draft Fisheries Mitigation Guidance](#) that was published in June 2022. This Guidance will likely remain in draft form and efforts are underway to align this guidance with potential impacts from floating offshore wind infrastructure that may differ from those included in the initial Draft Guidance.

BOEM reiterated that they lease in support of state energy goals in partnership with States and that there is no further action on the unsolicited lease requests in federal waters off Washington. See Washington update, below.

Socioeconomic Characterization of West Coast Fisheries In Relation to Offshore Wind Energy Development

Dr. Lisa Pfeiffer, Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC), and Lilah Isé, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) West Coast Region, presented an overview ([slides](#)) of their recently completed Report entitled [Socioeconomic Characterization of West Coast Fisheries in Relation to Offshore Wind Energy Development](#), which was funded by BOEM. The Report's three overarching goals are to:

- Provide an overview of West Coast fisheries and fishing communities, including supportive industries (primary and secondary/ancillary markets), fishing-related infrastructure, fishing sector interconnections, and potential connections between fishing sectors and offshore wind energy development;
- Provide an overview of relevant sources of fisheries socioeconomic information available for West Coast fisheries; and
- Provide relevant examples of fisheries socioeconomic methods routinely used by NMFS in analyzing potential impacts to fisheries participants and communities of proposed

fisheries management actions as well as to assess impacts from other drivers, such as changes in fish stock abundance, market forces, and climate variability, etc.

The highly informative one-hour presentation can be viewed on the [Recording of the October 9 MPC meeting](#) beginning at about the 19-minute mark. It bears noting, the NMFS Report is not intended to tell BOEM what to do with respect to analyzing potential fishery or fishing community impacts; but is sharing relevant information and assessment methods from fisheries management and provides recommendations for what else may be necessary (e.g., data, methods) to assess impacts to West Coast fisheries from OSW development. The Report's recommendations would apply to any entity considering how to assess socioeconomic impacts to fisheries and fishing communities from offshore wind development.

For data gaps identified, the Council may wish to consider those also in the context of fisheries management priorities and consider potential actions for addressing those gaps. The Council could consider asking the States, NMFS, or other relevant Agencies to start collecting particular fisheries datasets that may be currently identified as a knowledge gap in being able to understand offshore and impacts on a particular fishery or sector.

Cumulative Impacts and Data Gaps

The MPC has been working on a high-level framework document for identifying key issues and potential impacts of offshore wind. Mr. John Hansen, Executive Director of the West Coast Ocean Alliance (WCOA), provided an overview of WCOA's work that is being planned around cumulative impacts, and is taking a broader approach than just offshore wind.

Acknowledging the various efforts underway through Federal, state, and tribal channels on the subject of cumulative impact analysis, WCOA will support the development of a new West Coast Cumulative Impacts Needs Assessment. Funding has been set aside to hire a contractor and conduct the needs assessment working with our members and other Regional partners to define:

- What is happening?
- What are the needs from the members of our Alliance Group in terms of regional cumulative impacts analysis that links to their management?; and
- How do we then identify opportunities for future collaboration, for supporting future analyses, whether that would be something WCOA would support, or other partners could support, as well as building around where there are leveraging opportunities and common needs in the west coast region.

The output from the Needs Assessment will result in an Action Plan having specific strategies and recommendations for how WCOA can support and engage with current, or future, cumulative impact analysis efforts in the region while looking at other partnership opportunities and leveraging opportunities.

California Update

During the MPC presentation to the Council during your September meeting, we referenced the recently published [Representative Project Design Envelope for Floating Offshore Wind Energy: A Focus on the California 2023 Federal Leases](#). This will likely form the foundation for the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement mentioned above.

The California OSW Energy Fisheries Working Group met September 30 - October 1 as it continues to work on “developing a statewide strategy for ensuring that offshore wind energy projects avoid and minimize impacts to ocean fisheries to the maximum extent possible, avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to fishing and fisheries in a manner that prioritizes fishery productivity, viability, and long-term resilience, and fairly and reasonably compensate persons engaged in the commercial and recreational fishing industries and tribal fisheries for economic impacts to ocean fisheries resulting from offshore wind energy projects.” ([Ca SB 286 2023](#))

Subsequent to the MPC meeting, Golden State Wind let the fishing community around Morro Bay know of their plans to deploy two meteorological buoys in their lease site during November. They are anticipated to remain within the lease area for two years.

Oregon Update

At the same time BOEM decided to postpone the Oregon lease auction, Sept. 27, 2024, Oregon Governor Tina Kotek sent a [letter](#) to BOEM asking for a halt to OSW leasing off Oregon and withdrawing the state from the BOEM Oregon Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force. In the letter, Governor Kotek stated that the state “*must have full confidence that our state’s Roadmap will be complete and all associated enforceable policies in place before BOEM proceeds with additional lease-related activities in future years.*”

Oregon Offshore Wind Energy Roadmap

The MPC received an update on Oregon Offshore Wind Energy Roadmap which stems from House Bill 4080, directing the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) to create an [Oregon Offshore Wind Energy Roadmap](#) that supports:

- Effective community engagement;
- Local and regional coastal communities ;
- The creation of economic opportunities and sustainment of existing and regional economies;
- The creation of an offshore wind energy workforce that is local, trained, house and equitable;
- Protection of tribal cultural and archaeological resources, culturally significant viewsheds and other interest of Indian tribes;
- Protection of the environment and marine species; and
- Achievement of state energy and climate policy objectives, including energy resource diversity, reliability and resilience of state and regional energy systems.

To achieve this, DLCDC sought Oregonians to serve as members of the state’s Oregon Offshore Wind Energy Roadmap Roundtable. This recruitment application period ended on Oct. 14, 2024, and was designed to represent a variety of interest groups and perspectives from across the state. The Roadmap Roundtable is expected to convene in all-day meetings held once a month and will begin in November 2024.

Washington Update

As WDFW highlighted to the Council in September, Governor Inslee sent a letter (D.2, Attachment 1) to the Washington Coastal Marine Advisory Council (WCMAC) on September 18 to announce that he had “*decided not to request a federal offshore wind planning process at this time*” based on his view that the “*state will be best off pursuing additional research and state preparation prior*

to inviting a formal federal planning and evaluation process.” The Governor also sent letters to the coastal tribes.

The letter to the WCMAC identified two major reasons for the decision. First was the respect he holds for the concerns expressed by the WCMAC, tribes, and others over the uncertain effects of OSW on the marine ecosystem and tribal treaty rights and the value he himself places on the need for additional research. Secondly, while stressing the state’s urgent need for new clean energy sources the Governor recognized that *“offshore wind is not yet economically competitive with other zero-emission resources in our state.”*

The Governor also announced he would pursue budget provisos to *“advance offshore wind research efforts”* and to direct *“relevant state agencies to synthesize and report on state authorities applicable during a federal leasing process for offshore wind facilities.”* Lastly, the letter emphasized the threat that climate change poses to marine ecosystems and highlighted the Governor’s recognition of Washington’s *“opportunity to support the Biden-Harris Administration’s offshore wind goals by furthering our participation in the offshore wind supply chain.”*

The next meeting of the WCMAC meeting will be held on December 3. Meeting materials are expected to be posted two weeks prior to the meeting to the [Washington Department of Ecology’s EZView page](#). The meeting will be virtual and also recorded by TVW.

NMFS Update

NMFS provided updates on upcoming and ongoing studies.

NMFS, BOEM, the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE), and the U.S. Coast Guard are working to finalize an agreement with the National Academies of Sciences for it to conduct a study of impacts on shipping and commercial, tribal, and recreational fisheries from development of renewable energy on the West Coast as outlined in the [National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023, Section 11319](#). A solicitation for nominations is anticipated to go out late this year.

Several studies are underway by the NWFSC and Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC). The NWFSC recently submitted two manuscripts to PLOS ONE and PLOS Climate, respectively: (i) comparing region wide and state-by-state approaches for identifying areas for OSW development that optimizes for reducing conflict between OSW and commercial fisheries, and (ii) quantifying the overlap of groundfish trawl fisheries with proposed OSW energy areas and then using projected species distribution models to predict how these areas of overlap may shift in the future due to climate change effects on target species’ spatial distributions.

The California Current Integrated Ecosystem Assessment (CCIEA) team has three research projects looking at how climate change may affect suitable habitat and interactions with OSW in the future for (i) five seabird species, (ii) four highly migratory species (HMS) and four marine mammals, and for (iii) albacore tuna and its fisheries. The NWFSC and SWFSC continue to develop overall ecosystem indicators for oceanographic processes and lower trophic level indicators to inform OSW-related interactions, as described in NMFS’ last CCIEA report. The

NWFSC will soon start two projects that will combine ecological (e.g., targeted species' population dynamics), survey mitigation, and social (e.g., fishing behavior) factors resulting from changes in fishing pressure in and around Wind Energy Areas (similar to marine protected area effects) that may affect population dynamics, assessment parameters, and ultimately management advice. The NWFSC is collaborating with the University of California Santa Barbara on a [study](#) looking at the resilience of commercial fisheries in the face of OSW and climate change, and have provided data and contributed to the analytical framework. Focus groups with local fishing communities were recently held and results are being summarized. For the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory's West Coast transmission study, the NWFSC contributed groundfish bottom trawl, crab, and HMS fisheries data coastwide.

Tribal Update

Washington Governor Jay Inslee sent a letter to the [Washington Coastal Marine Advisory Council](#). Since the MPC met, the Washington Tribes received formal communication from the Governor's office, proposing to meet with the Tribes to develop a science plan. Additionally, the Tribes appreciated the postponement of Oregon's auction because it will give them time to work with NMFS on the strategic science plan. At that point, the Tribes may have more to report.

Other

The MPC is planning a meeting in early December to discuss the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the Aquaculture Opportunity Areas within the Southern California Bight and BOEM's Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the five lease sites in federal waters off California. Both are expected to be released in November. Depending on the timing, a quick response process may be necessary to develop comment letters. The MPC anticipates working with the HC and other Advisory Bodies as necessary to develop comments.

The MPC reiterates it would like to meet in person during the Council's 2025 schedule. We look forward to working with Council staff to determine which Council meeting would be most appropriate.

MPC Year at a Glance

* At best a guess and subject to change – last updated 10/10/24

| Q2 2024 | Q3 2024 | Q4 2024 | Q1 2025 |
|---|--|---|--|
| Oregon Draft EA & PSN (April) | Oregon Final EA & FSN (Aug/Sept) | Oregon Auction (Oct) | Potential California Call Areas |
| Oregon Consistency Review (May/June) | Draft PEIS Ca Leases (Late fall) | CADEMO NOP/NOI EIR/EIS (Dec) | Oregon – FCPs/ACPs/NATCPs |
| Washington – engagement strategy (May/June) | Feasibility Study – SB 605 (Ca) – July/September | NREL/PNNL/DOE Transmission Planning | Draft EIR - Humboldt Bay Offshore Wind Heavy Lift Multipurpose Marine Terminal Project |
| | | MPC Roadmap/Vision Quest | Pier Wind Draft EIR/EIS (LA/LB) – Spring 2025 |
| | | Draft PEIS for AOAs | |

PFMC
10/23/24