

Thursday, May 26, 2022 - Takeaways, Notes, Resources  
NHSG Fisheries Roundtable Series  
Panelists: Mark Sanborn (NH DES), Chris Williams (NH DES)  
Topic: Offshore Wind Siting Process in the Gulf of Maine

#### NH Sea Grant Contacts

- Gabby Bradt: [Gabriela.Bradt@unh.edu](mailto:Gabriela.Bradt@unh.edu)
- Katy Bland: [katy@neracoos.org](mailto:katy@neracoos.org)

#### *Acronym Cheat Sheet:*

- GoM: Gulf of Maine
- BOEM: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (federal agency responsible for offshore renewable energy development)
- NH DES: New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services
- NH F&G: New Hampshire Fish & Game
- NHSG: New Hampshire Sea Grant
- NHCP: New Hampshire Coastal Program
- RFI: Request for Information
- WEA: Wind Energy Area
- PSN: Proposed Sale Notice
- FSN: Final Sale Notice
- CZMA: Coastal Zone Management Act
- GLD : Geographic Location Description
- POI: Point of Interconnection

#### *Roundtable Takeaways*

- An offshore wind energy lease auction is scheduled to occur in late 2024. Even though the fishing industry cannot change or stop BOEM's siting process, **they CAN influence where siting occurs.**
- **NH state agencies will do everything they can to give NH stakeholders a voice.**
- For offshore wind SITING in the GoM, there are parallel processes that NH stakeholders should be involved in:
  - 1: BOEM's siting process, which is summarized below and will have public comment periods.
  - 2: NH's Geographic Location Description (GLD) development, which is a powerful tool summarized below, that gives the state review of certain federal actions in the federal waters that affect NH coastal resources and uses. Fishing industry input is critical to the development of a GLD and will inform what is submitted to NOAA.
- These two processes can utilize the same datasets and spatial knowledge.
- The state is creating the Offshore Wind Engagement Initiative to outline when and how to be involved in these two parallel processes.

#### *Potential Next Steps*

- NHSG will plan further roundtable discussions with steering committee input based on session evaluations. If you have attended a Roundtable session, you will receive an email directly from NHSG with information. Reach out to Katy or Gabby (contact info above) with further feedback or questions.

- The state and partners will update and send out the Offshore Wind Engagement Initiative to outline opportunities for stakeholders to be involved, and how they will engage different groups
- NH DES and NH Fish and Game will delineate specific data gaps, where fishing industry knowledge is critical to fill

## *Panelist Presentation Summaries*

### ***Delivered by Mark Sanborn:***

#### **BOEM Offshore Wind Energy Area Identification in the Gulf of Maine:**

BOEM's Wind Energy Development Process in the GoM can be broken down into four phases: 1) Planning and Analysis (~1 year); 2) Leasing (~1 year), 3) Site Assessment (~6 years), and 4) Construction and Operations.

In July 2022, BOEM will kick off the "Planning and Analysis" phase of the Gulf of Maine Planning Area with a "Request for Interest" (RFI). Following the release of the RFI, there will be a **45-day** comment period targeting both the **public (to receive specific and detailed comments on the categories outlined in the RFI)** and offshore wind developers (to determine if there is competitive development interest). **BOEM will specifically request information on the categories listed in the [RFI Development Framework](#), within the [Planning Area](#) only (beyond 3nm from shore).** NH will provide guidance on what type and format of comment will be most useful at this stage of the siting process. BOEM will use comments received from the RFI to develop a draft "Call Area". Following stakeholder meetings, Tribal meetings, and public regional meetings in late 2022, BOEM will revise the draft Call Area. BOEM will publish the "Call" in early 2023, **which will commence another 45-day public comment period.** BOEM will use comments to "winnow" the Call Area down to a "Wind Energy Area" (WEA), which will be designated in mid-2023. (See BOEM's *Gulf of Maine Engagement Approach Graphic* below).

Between WEA designation (mid-2023) and delineation of exact lease areas and lease terms, BOEM will 1) conduct an environmental assessment of the WEA, 2) establish draft lease areas within the WEA, and 3) publish a Proposed Sale Notice (PSN), which will show draft lease areas and draft lease terms and **commence a 60-day comment period.** The Final Sale Notice (FSN) will show finalized lease areas, finalized lease terms, and outline details for the lease area auction. BOEM will hold a lease area auction in late 2024. The lease grants a developer the right to develop plans, which BOEM must approve in later siting phases. Following the auction (late-2024), BOEM and private companies will initiate the "Site Assessment" phase and the "Construction and Operations" phase.

### ***Delivered by Chris Williams:***

#### **New Hampshire's Geographic Location Description**

Through the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA), New Hampshire has the authority to review certain federal actions that take place **within the state's coastal zone (extends 3nm offshore)** through the **federal consistency** review process, to make sure they align with the state's **enforceable** policies. Federal consistency is a provision of the CZMA that provides a mechanism for states to manage coastal uses and resources and to facilitate cooperation and coordination with federal agencies. **Federal activities outside NH's coastal zone aren't subject to federal consistency review unless:** the applicant **voluntarily** submits to NHCP; the NHCP submits a request to NOAA to review the activity under federal consistency and NOAA approves the request; or **NHCP develops, and NOAA approves a Geographic Location Description (GLD).**

NH SB268 (signed into law May 27, 2022) requires the NH Coastal Program, in collaboration with NH F&G, NHSG, and other stakeholders, to develop a GLD to ensure that certain federally permitted activities located outside NH's coastal zone (e.g., offshore wind leasing in federal waters) are subject to federal consistency review. **In the absence of a GLD, the state has no regulatory authority over such activities.** NH DES and NH F&G will delineate specific data gaps where fishing industry knowledge is critical to fill.

A GLD consists of 1) a **coastal effects analysis** describing the **reasonably foreseeable effects** on the state's coastal resources and/or uses; 2) a **description of the specific geographic boundaries** of the area outside the state coastal zone for which the GLD is sought; and 3) **the specific federally permitted activities** that are subject to federal consistency review within the GLD boundary. The state's effects analysis shall, to the extent practicable, identify: 1) the affected uses and resources; 2) Where and in what densities the uses and resources are found; 3) how the state has a specific interest in the resources and uses (e.g., economic values, harvest amounts); 4) Where the proposed activity overlaps with the resources and uses; 5) impacts to the resources and uses from the activity; 6) A reasonable showing of a causal connection to the proposed activity, including how the impacts from the activity result in reasonably foreseeable effects on the state's coastal uses and resources; 7) Why any proposed mitigation may be inadequate; and 8) empirical data and information that supports the effects analysis.

**To develop the GLD, the NHCP, NH F&G, and existing offshore industry members will need to compile data and spatial knowledge.** Spatial data gaps will be identified in the coming months.

### *Roundtable Participant Questions:*

- Q: *How big will the Wind Energy Area be?*
  - Determination on windfarm size in the Gulf of Maine has not been made.
- Q: *How far offshore is it feasible for a wind farm to be?*
  - Unknown at this point.
- Q: *Do we know if the turbines will be floating? Will this be a full exclusion zone for fishing boats?*
  - The driver that determines the type of turbine (floating or fixed) is water depth. To be most conservative, assume that these will be floating and there will be full exclusion of vessels.
- Q: *What started this process?*
  - The process began with the Obama Administration, took a back seat with the Trump Administration, and has been made a priority of the Biden Administration. The Biden Administration has [established a domestic target of 30 Gigawatts of Offshore Wind Energy by 2030](#). While Maine and Massachusetts both have legislatively mandated offshore wind energy procurement goals, New Hampshire does not.
- Q: *Who will own the wind farm?*
  - The developer will own the energy infrastructure (turbines, cables, etc.), but the company will not own the seafloor or ocean. The developer will be leasing the area for the duration of the lease agreement (~25-30 years).
- Q: *How do we know that BOEM will take comments and input into consideration?*
  - As part of the Final Sale Notice in BOEM's siting process, BOEM outlines how they have taken comments and input into consideration. For an example from the New York Bight WEA, see [BOEM's January 2022 Response to Comments](#). For an example from the Carolina Long Bay WEA, see [BOEM's March 2022 Response to Comments](#).
- Q: *We don't have the tabulated data to back up claims about the most important fishing zones, so how do we support our claims?*
  - NH F&G will work with partners to compile existing spatial and economic data. They will need to work with industry to fill in the gaps.
- Q: *Where would the power cable come ashore in NH and what would be the impact?*
  - In New Hampshire, possible Points of Interconnection (POI) are (1) Schiller Generation Station (150 MW) in Portsmouth on the Piscataqua River, which closed in early 2022, (2) Newington Generation Station (400 MW) in Newington, also on the Piscataqua River, a quarter mile Northwest of Schiller, and (3) The Essential Power LLC Newington combined cycle gas turbine facility, a 525 MW natural gas-fired unit also near the Piscataqua River and less than a mile from Newington Station. More analysis is needed to

understand if Seabrook Nuclear Generating Station is a possible POI. See pages 24+25 of “[Report on Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Infrastructure and Supply Chain Opportunities as it Relates to the Deployment of Offshore Wind in the Gulf of Maine](#)” for more information.

- Q: *When will permitting begin?*
  - Permitting will begin multiple years after the auction takes place. For an example of the permitting timeline from [Vineyard Wind \(Massachusetts/Rhode Island WEA\)](#), see the [federal projects permitting dashboard](#).

### *Important Dates*

- June 15, 2022, 9-11am: [BOEM Reducing or Avoiding Impacts to Offshore Wind Energy on Fisheries, East Coast meeting](#) (BOEM’s recommendations for fishery impact fees/compensatory mitigation, SEPARATE from the Gulf of Maine siting process)
- TBD: NH DES and NH F&G
- TBD: NMSG Fisheries Roundtable Series
- July 2022: BOEM RFI Comment Period Opens

### *Links to Online Resources:*

- Sea Grant Offshore Wind Liaison Website (via Rhode Island Sea Grant): [National Sea Grant Offshore Wind Liaison Initiative \(seagrantenergy.org\)](#)
- BOEM Planning Area Map, Gulf of Maine: [GulfofMaine\\_PlanningArea\\_04262022.pdf \(boem.gov\)](#)
- BOEM Engagement Graphic, May 2022 - June 2023: [GoME Engagement Graphic \(boem.gov\)](#)



[ Planning & Analysis ]

[ Leasing ]

[ Site Assessment ]

[ Construction & Operations ]

