



**Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council**  
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Michael P. Luisi, Chairman | P. Weston Townsend, Vice Chairman  
Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

## **Ecosystem and Ocean Planning Committee Webinar Meeting Summary**

### **Committee Attendees**

Kate Wilke (Chair), Adam Nowalsky (Vice Chair), Bob Beal, Joe Cimino, Michelle Duval, Jay Hermesen, Kris Kuhn, Scott Lenox, Mike Luisi, Tom Schlichter, David Stormer, Sara Winslow

### **Other Attendees**

Michelle Bachman (NEFMC staff), Julia Beaty (MAFMC staff), Alan Bianchi (NC DMF), Bonnie Brady (EOP AP member), Jessica Coakley (MAFMC staff), Jenny Couture (NEFMC staff), Tony DiLernia (NYSERDA), Zoe Goozner (The Pew Charitable Trusts), Peter Himchak (EOP AP member), Jeff Kaelin (EOP AP member), Ron Larsen (Sea Risk Solutions), Meghan Lapp (EOP AP member), Brian LeFebvre, Reneé Reilly, Mark Rousseau

### **Background**

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) adopted a [policy on offshore wind energy development](#) in December 2015. The New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) adopted an identical policy in 2018. Offshore wind energy development has continued to advance at a rapid pace since that time and both Councils have written many [joint comment letters](#) on the subject. The offshore wind policy helps to inform these comment letters.

### **Meeting Objectives**

- Review NEFMC Habitat PDT, Habitat Advisory Panel, and Habitat Committee recommendations for revisions to offshore wind energy policy.
- Review EOP Advisory Panel recommendations for revisions to offshore wind energy policy.
- Develop recommendations to the MAFMC regarding the offshore wind energy policy.

### **Meeting Summary**

The EOP Committee supported the wind policy revisions recommended by the NEFMC Habitat PDT, AP, and Committee, as well as the MAFMC EOP AP. The EOP Committee recommend additional edits which are indicated in a document provided with the Council's December 2021 briefing materials.<sup>1</sup> The rationale behind some of these edits, as well as key points of discussion which did not result in suggested edits, are summarized below. Please refer to the December 2021 Council meeting briefing materials for a complete summary of the specific changes recommended by the EOP Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> See pages 8-13 of the briefing materials linked here: [https://www.mafmc.org/s/Tab02\\_Offshore-Wind\\_2021-12.pdf](https://www.mafmc.org/s/Tab02_Offshore-Wind_2021-12.pdf)

The Committee noted that the revised wind energy policy does not substantively change the current policy but rather builds upon it to reflect positions that the two Councils have already been communicating through recent comment letters. Nothing in the revised policy conflicts with the current policy.

The Committee noted that although the language in the policy is intentionally broad and high level, the Council will continue to engage with the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), wind project developers, and others on specific offshore wind energy issues and may provide more detailed and specific input through other venues. For example, the Council may wish to provide input on fisheries mitigation through the ongoing BOEM effort to consider developing regional guidance for fisheries mitigation. The Council's wind energy policy need not encompass all specific comments that the Council may wish to make on all relevant issues, but rather serves as a high level summary.

One Committee member noted that several states are working towards greater collaboration and consistency in offshore wind energy development at a regional level. It would be beneficial for the two Councils to maintain identical, or at least very similar, wind policies for the states to consider in these efforts.

The Committee recommended addition of an introductory statement in the policy indicating that the Council will regularly review this policy and that the response to Council comments will be part of this review. They did not feel that this would fit within the body of the policy, but it should be included in the document to help make this point clear. Staff have provided draft text to reflect this in the version of the draft policy provided with the briefing materials for the December 2021 Council meeting. One Committee member suggested that Council comments that appear to be repeatedly ignored should somehow be elevated within BOEM.

The Committee agreed by consensus to move the offshore wind energy policy, as modified, to the full Council for approval.