

California Coastal Commission

California Offshore Wind Energy Fisheries Working Group Meeting #2

April 9, 2024

Introduction

In accordance with [Condition 7c of the California Coastal Commission's concurrence](#) with the 5 offshore wind energy lease sales issued by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) and [Senate Bill 286](#), the California Coastal Commission convened the second California Offshore Wind Energy Fisheries Working Group meeting in two parts on February 22 and 29, 2024. The goal of the California Offshore Wind and Fisheries Working Group is to develop a statewide strategy for avoidance, minimization, and mitigation of impacts to fishing and fisheries that prioritizes fisheries productivity, viability, and long-term resilience. The strategy is expected to include protocols for communication; best practices for site assessment surveys and data collection; a methodology for comprehensive socioeconomic analysis of direct and indirect impacts to fishing; a framework for compensatory mitigation for unavoidable impacts; and a fishing agreement template that memorializes the elements of the strategy.

Meeting Objectives

The second meeting of the Working Group included the following objectives:

- Review and approve Working Group Charter;
- Build common understanding of site assessment activities, prior environmental analysis of site surveys, and bioacoustics;
- Build common understanding of prior fisheries agreements in California, provide input to subgroup on areas to focus on for further development; and
- Revise and comment on annotated outline for the best practices.

Meeting Date, Time, and Location

Virtual Meeting on Zoom
Thursday, February 22, 2024
9:00 am – 3:00 pm PT and

Thursday, February 29, 2024
9:00 am – 3:00 pm PT

Meeting Format

The meeting was conducted virtually over two days. On day one, Working Group members provided feedback on the draft Working Group Charter, a series of presenters talked about survey activities, science and environmental review of survey activities, and provided revisions on the draft Best Practices for Site Assessment Surveys document. On day two, a series of expert presenters described prior fishing agreements (e.g. cable committee agreements, Castle Wind agreement, Joint Oil/Fisheries Oil Liaison Office) and template agreements, and heard an update on work from a subgroup that is identifying potential impacts to fisheries from offshore wind development to then build avoidance and minimization strategies.

Working Group members were invited to raise their hands and share questions, comments, and perspectives verbally throughout the meeting. They were also given the opportunity to share input and questions via the Zoom chat function.

Key Topics and Themes

Working Group Charter

Major themes of the input and comments received over the two days of the meeting by Working Group members on the Draft Charter are included below.

- Some language changes to enhance clarity and to include text from SB 286.
- Survey of each Working Group member to gauge level of support for adoption of the Charter.
- On February 29, all Working Group members in attendance expressed support to approve the updated Charter based on final refinements made on February 22 and 29.

Information Sharing about Site Assessment Surveys

Major themes of the presentations, input and comments received by Working Group members during the information sharing about Best Practices for Site Assessment Surveys are included below.

- Presentations and updates from Working Group members about proposed survey activities and other activity updates.
- Working group members inquired about survey plan specifics and timing.
- Dr. Arthur Popper presented information about fish and sound and answered questions that had been submitted prior to the meeting.
- Working group members asked clarifying questions about impacts from different sound frequencies and decibel levels.
- Dr. Erica Staaterman presented information about marine mammals and acoustics with a focus on sound produced during high resolution geophysical surveys.
- Working group members inquired about future studies that BOEM is considering.
- Dr. Staaterman and Dr. Popper communicated that impacts from sound on fish and marine mammals during site assessment are expected to be minimal and not cause harm or mortality to fish, or marine mammals.
- BOEM presented an overview of the Environmental Assessment (EA) conducted for the lease of wind energy areas.
- Working group members inquired about the connection between the EA and future environmental impact statements.

Site Assessment Surveys Best Practices Document

Major themes of the input and comments received by Working Group members on the annotated draft outline of the Site Assessment Survey Best Practices are included below.

- Working Group members discussed the permitting steps for site assessment surveys and enforcement of permits.
- Working group members suggested additional practices, details, and information to be added to the outline.

- There was discussion on studying the impacts from the surveys and a suggestion to include research ideas as an appendix to the statewide strategy being developed by the group.

Fishing Agreement Expert Presentations and Fishing Template Discussion

Major topics and comments from Working Group members discussed during expert presentations on prior fishing agreements and templates are included below.

- Expert presenters shared process and design ideas from previous fishing agreements and current offshore wind template agreements.
- Working group members inquired about who and how membership of agreements was decided, who was eligible to receive funds, the types of projects funded by the agreements, and how fund amounts were determined.
- Working group members discussed what development and operation activities should be covered in the Fishing Agreement Template being produced by the Working Group.
- Working group members noted portions of existing/previous agreements should be built upon and included in the Template while at the same time saying offshore wind development is new and the impacts are new so the Template Agreement will need to go beyond previous examples.

Update from Subgroup Working on Impacts to Fisheries

Major topics and comments from Working Group members related to the update on Impacts to Fisheries subgroup work are included below.

- Subgroup members shared the approach the subgroup was taking to identifying assumptions, connecting assumptions to potential impacts then identifying ways to avoid and minimize those potential impacts.
- Subgroup work is ongoing.

Planning for Meeting #3

Major themes of the input and comments received from Working Group members on planning for Meeting #3 are included below.

- Working group members noted that the next meeting will need to address Communications Protocols and whether to build out separate protocols from what is currently contained in the Fisheries Communication Plans from the lessees.
- Information was provided, links and contact information, for Fisheries Communication Plans.
- Subgroups will continue to meet between full Working Group meetings to advance Site Assessment Survey Best Practices, Fisheries Agreement Template, and Avoidance and Minimization measures.