

California Coastal Commission

California Offshore Wind Energy Fisheries Working Group Meeting #1

February 29, 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 first California Offshore Wind Energy Fisheries Working Group meeting on December 6, 2023. 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 first meeting of the Working Group included the following objectives:

- Get to know and build relationships with other Working Group members;
- Review draft Working Group Charter document; and
- Review a proposed outline and recommend draft content for the best practices.

Meeting Date, Time, and Location

Virtual Meeting on Zoom
Wednesday, December 6, 2023
9:00 am – 5:00 pm PT

Meeting Format

The meeting was conducted virtually and consisted of an introductions and interest-sharing exercise, review and facilitated discussion on the Draft Working Group Charter, review and facilitated discussion on the Best Practices for Site Assessment Surveys document, discussion on Meeting #2, and some time for Q&A.

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. Lastly, a Zoom poll was conducted to ask participants where they were joining the meeting from.

Key Topics and Themes

Working Group Charter

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

- Working Group members requested additional background information on work done by fisheries over the last several years on agreements and mitigation, Tribal fisheries, and impacts.
- Members had several questions about compensatory mitigation.
- There was a request to provide further clarity on terms such as “surveys” by Working Group members.
- Other topics of discussion included the Working Group decision-making process, operating protocols, and the schedule of topics and deliverables where some members suggested a “non-linear” or parallel process for working on deliverables.

Best Practices for Site Assessment Surveys

Major themes of the input and comments received by Working Group members on the Best Practices for Site Assessment Surveys document are included below.

- Working Group members inquired about the anticipated number of vessel trips during the site assessment period and noted the importance of doing site assessments during periods of time that are less impactful to fisheries.
- Working Group members inquired about offshore substations and whether they would be located within the lease area. Lessees shared that it is anticipated that all substations will be located within the lease area.
- Impacts of sound on fish and marine mammals during site assessment was a key point of discussion, and particularly whether sound can impact fish and marine mammal behavior.

Planning for Meeting #2

Major themes of the input and comments received by Working Group members on topics and planning for Meeting #2 are included below.

- Working Group members shared that it would be helpful to hear from fisheries representatives on work that they’ve done previously on other agreements and on mitigation in this space.
- Working Group members noted that presentations and information about plans from lessees would also be helpful to support future discussions.
- Working Group members asked if it would be possible to complete the Best Practices for Site Assessment Surveys deliverable earlier in the process, and if it would be possible to send it to the Commission for review ahead of the other deliverables.
- Working Group members noted that the first subgroup should be focused on communications and that this also ties in with the Best Practices for Site Assessment Surveys deliverable as communication is an important component.