



FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON OFFSHORE WIND

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Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
Office of Renewable Energy Programs
45600 Woodland Road (VAM-OREP)
Sterling, Virginia 20166

To Whom It May Concern:

The New Bedford Port Authority (NBPA) Fisheries Advisory Committee on Offshore Wind is comprised of fishing interests from Maine to North Carolina. We would like to submit the following comments to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) as it drafts its Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Construction and Operations plan submitted by Vineyard Wind LLC.

Section 7(a) of the Commercial lease between Vineyard Wind and BOEM states:

The Lessee further agrees that no activities authorized by this lease will be carried out in a manner that:

- (a) Could unreasonably interfere with or endanger activities or operations carried out under any license or grant issued or maintained pursuant to the Act, or under any other license or approval from any Federal agency.

As you well know, commercial fishing vessels have approval from NOAA to engage in fishing activities in Vineyard Wind LLC's lease area, and this project cannot unreasonably interfere with or endanger their fishing activities. It is imperative that Vineyard Wind and all of the developers continue to engage with our group so we can prevent any unreasonable interference with fishing activities in the lease area and so we can develop a plan and process for the offshore wind industry to grow and coexist with our fishing industry.

General Comments and Concerns

- This COP struggles to identify all of the fisheries impacted by Vineyard Wind's proposed site and acknowledges the gaps in fisheries data because a number of the species in the lease area, namely fluke, scup, sea bass, whiting, butterfish, red hake and ling are conducted without the

requirement of VMS. BOEM and Vineyard Wind should see the NBPA as a resource to help fill those data gaps and more detail on the plan to mitigate those impacts would be helpful.

- BOEM needs to extrapolate the potential impact on fisheries of a full build out scenario at this site and at all of the other sites on the outer continental shelf.
- To date there has been little communication or coordination between offshore wind developers regarding cable routes or transit lanes. We understand that this is changing, which is a positive development. Coordination is needed on transit lanes and turbine layouts to minimize the impact on navigation. The group also believes that pre-approved and shared cable corridors will minimize the impact on fisheries.
- The size and scale of the project is of great concern to fishermen who target all species and there is significant concern among our group that a larger, 800MW project would have a larger unknown impact than a smaller project.
- Despite assurances from all developers to the contrary, it is the opinion of our group that once a wind farm is constructed most, if not all, mobile-gear fishermen will be unable to harvest fish in the lease area as proposed.
- We would like Vineyard Wind to provide more details on the proposed study to be conducted by UMass Dartmouth's SMAST and identify ways that the fishing industry can be represented.
- As Vineyard Wind noted in their submission, the proposal is in a prime squid fishing area. Our group believes the project will likely have a dramatic and adverse impact on the squid fishery. The proposed area is in the middle of some of the most productive squid fishing ground, which flourish in the spring and summer. Once wind turbines are installed, the squid fishing vessels represented on our committee are indicating that they will not be able to fish within the array of wind turbines, seriously undercutting their landings and financial viability.
- The proposed lease area is also located in prime fishing grounds for fluke, flounder, scup, whiting, red hake, and sea bass fishermen. The inability to fish in these valuable fishing grounds will impact the financial situation of these fishing vessels.
- The proposed installation will also have an impact on other groundfishing vessels. The squid vessels that currently do not harvest groundfish lease their groundfish quota to other groundfish vessels throughout southern New England. Those squid vessels will no longer lease the fish, but rather fish it themselves, thereby causing financial losses to the groundfish fleet.
- The lease area lies between the primary fishing ports and active scallop fishing grounds, making transit through the lease area a concern. The regulations for the scallop fleet mandate that the vessel has a limited number of days at sea. Transit through or around the lease area will be charged against the limited number of days at sea allocated to the scallop fleet. Additionally, the scallop fleet believes much larger transit lanes of 4 miles between each turbine may be necessary.
- Transit through this area is also important to the red crab, jonah crab and offshore lobster fisheries.
- The NBPA can facilitate more interaction between BOEM/Vineyard Wind and fixed gear fishermen who may not be represented in the fisheries data.

- There is concern among the fluke, scup, butterfish and whiting fisheries that the installation of wind turbines in the lease areas will prevent vessels from towing between turbines.
- The surf clam and ocean quahog fisheries participants are sure that they will not be able to fish within the wind turbine array and the connecting cable will also be a problem. The cable corridors including through Muskeget Channel must be monitored and kept at a depth of at least 2 meters at all times.
- There are questions among fishermen and other mariners regarding radar interference that will occur while transiting the lease area.
- There is no detailed mitigation plan and process for the financial losses caused by the installation of wind turbines to the fisheries impacted by the Vineyard Wind lease area. The NBPA proposes to work with Vineyard Wind on the development of a mitigation plan to be included in the Fisheries Communication Plan.

Fisheries Communication Plan Comments:

- The Fisheries Communication Plan is a solid draft. The fishermen on the committee would like to be involved in the next iteration of the plan based on the feedback provided in this letter through NBPA as Fisheries' Representative to Vineyard Wind.
- We would like Vineyard Wind and all developers to adopt and endorse a standardized process for fisheries engagement, with components that reflect the unique makeup of Vineyard Wind's lease site's fisheries stakeholders.
- Our proposed Fisheries Communication Plan process (components taken from BOEM's 2015 *Guidelines*):
 - Quarterly public meetings with all fishing interests and more frequent meetings with our Fisheries Advisory Committee on Offshore Wind or individual fishermen that will identify and tackle issues pertaining to the following:
 - Potentially affected fisheries;
 - Communication methods and tools;
 - Measures under consideration to reduce potential impacts to fishery resources and operations;
 - Potential methods to monitor effectiveness of impact-reduction measures.
 - Science initiatives to monitor the impact of the proposed project
 - Best practices for dismantling at end of useful life
 - Mitigation projects

Decommissioning Plan Comments:

- We would like BOEM to ensure that in the future there is an option to have the ocean floor returned to its original state; otherwise it could be a permanent exclusion of all bottom-tending mobile fishing gear from the area.
- We would like BOEM to calculate the cost of full decommissioning (including the removal of all cables, foundations, scour protection, turbines, substations and expected inflation). That dollar amount will be representative of future decommissioning costs and it should be the required amount on the decommissioning assurance bond.

- We would like to know how deep the foundation will be cut in accordance with the BOEM's removal standards (30 C.F.R. 250.913).
- We would like BOEM to require additional surveys to ensure compliance with decommissioning.

Areas where additional independent study is requested:

- There is no scientific process in place to measure the impact of individual turbines, a whole wind farm, and all of the wind farms proposed for the continental shelf on individual fisheries.
- Any diversion of fishing effort outside of the lease area will have an unintended consequence of increasing fishing effort in the remaining areas. The impact of that diversion should be studied to identify its impacts to fisheries and to fishermen.
- The potential impact of this proposal to the right whale population in this area should be studied if it hasn't already.
- A comprehensive study with the USCG and professional mariners on transit navigational concerns can alleviate some concerns from fishermen based in New Bedford, Pt. Judith, Montauk, Shinnecock and points south transiting the area.
- Impacts of this proposal to cod and herring spawning, squid mop and scallop larvae transfer areas needs to be studied.
- The effects of the harmonic vibration and electromagnetic frequency (EMF) caused by the installation of the cables and the wind turbines are should be studied.
- Impacts of the Acoustic Sound Ring when Pile Driving 34' mono piling 100' into the ocean bed.

It is difficult to make comments on a plan that is subject to alteration and change. While we appreciate the fact that a "design envelope" may lead to more flexibility during the design phase, the lack of clarity makes it difficult to measure the impact of a full build-out scenario. Accordingly, should this document not include comments on this construction and operations plan that are later determined to affect the fisheries, we ask that the omission not be considered a failure to comment.

Thank you for the opportunity to make comments to ahead of BOEM's draft EIS on Vineyard Wind's Construction and Operations plan. We look forward to constructive engagement with BOEM and Vineyard Wind to ensure their proposal is realized in a way that does not impact our historic commercial fisheries. We believe the fisheries engagement process outlined above is the key to coexistence and can set the stage for future cooperation and areas of mutual benefit.

Sincerely,

New Bedford Port Authority Fisheries Advisory Committee on Offshore Wind

Drew Minkiewicz- **Fisheries Survival Fund**, scallops

Charlie Quinn- **Quinn Fisheries**, scallops
Pat Kavanagh- **Kavanagh Fisheries**, groundfish, scallops
Peter Anthony- **Eastern Fisheries**, scallops
Jon Williams- **Atlantic Red Crab**, red crab, jonah crab, slime eel
Jeff Murray- **F/V Deborah Ann, F/V Max and Emma, F/V Miss Emma**, lobster, scallops, crab
John Haran- **Sector 13**, groundfish
John Murray- **M&B Seafood**, scallops, lobster, crab
Dave Stanley- **Bergies Seafood**, groundfish
Eoin Rochford- **Norpel**, mackerel, herring
Dan Eilertsen- **Nordic Inc**, scallops, groundfish
Chad Brayton- **Atlantic Capes Fisheries**, surf clams, quahogs, scallops
Katie Almeida- **Town Dock**, squid
Bonnie Brady- **Long Island Commercial Fishing Association**- squid, fluke, butterfish, whiting
Meghan Lapp- **Seafreeze Ltd**, squid, herring, mackerel
Spencer Bode- **Pier Fish**- groundfish, squid
Tom Williams- **F/V Heritage and F/V Tradition**, squid
Fred Mattera- **East Farm Commercial Fisheries Center**
Dave Wallace- **Wallace and Associates**, offshore surf clam and quahog
Harriet Didriksen- **New Bedford Ship Supply, F/V Settler**- scallops
Cassie Canastra- **BASE Seafood**, groundfish, scallop auction