

Environment and Wildlife Working Group

Offshore Wind Roadmap: Charting a Course for Maine

DETAILED DESCRIPTION AND APPROACH

Overall Scope

The Governor's Energy Office (GEO) believes that offshore wind will play a key role in meeting Maine's renewable energy targets and addressing climate change. Maine's position near New England's population centers with high energy demands, an enterprising citizenry with maritime experience, an innovative research environment with more than a decade of experience with floating offshore wind, and a high quality wind resource make our state an ideal place to responsibly develop an offshore wind industry. Maine needs to identify how to support an offshore wind economy in a way that embraces the opportunity, while ensuring the sustainability of our Maine coastal heritage, existing ocean users, and environment. With this, the state is developing the *Offshore Wind Roadmap: Charting a Course for Maine*, funded by a grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration.

This working group will identify best practices, data gaps, and research needs to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts of offshore wind in the Gulf of Maine on wildlife (e.g., birds, bats, marine mammals, other protected species) and address broader environmental impacts to habitat.

Goals of the Working Group

- Produce actionable, prioritized strategies to avoid, minimize or mitigate potential impacts of offshore wind to the marine environment and wildlife; and
- Provide recommendations towards implementation of those strategies, including potential policy changes, research, funding options, and partnerships, in the immediate, near term (through 2025), and longer-term (from 2026 – 2040).

Deliverables to Advisory Committee

- Recommended criteria and standards Maine should incorporate in comments for siting future offshore wind projects in the Gulf of Maine to protect vulnerable species, important habitats and areas of ecological value.
- A list of prioritized data, research, and monitoring that Maine should pursue, along with its regional partners, to improve our understanding and inform the federal leasing and permitting process in the Gulf of Maine and to improve our understanding pre, during and post construction. Initial baseline data collection for the Gulf of Maine should be identified and promoted prior to completion of the Roadmap process.
- Identification of recommended practices for environmentally responsible development Maine should promote to protect wildlife and the marine environment in the development of future offshore wind projects and throughout the project life cycle.
- Recommend research priorities for the State Research Consortium to design, fund and oversee Maine's Research Array.
- Regulatory or other policy options Maine should consider to promote due consideration of the impacts of offshore wind on Maine's fisheries and marine ecosystem in the federal process.



- Suggested approach and list of future topics to continue dialogue and input from Maine’s wildlife and environment interests to inform and shape the development of offshore wind in the Gulf of Maine going forward.
- Work with other working groups to review approaches related to offshore transmission that support offshore wind while minimizing impact to the environment and wildlife.

Work Plan

This section outlines the activities of the working group:

- **Mutual Learning:** Initial working group meetings will focus on building a shared understanding of priority topics selected by working group members such as offshore wind and cabling technology, federal and state roles in permitting, fisheries impacts, etc. These can be through short webinars.
- **Engage:** Throughout the process we will engage with a variety of coastal and marine stakeholders and experts to elicit their ideas, hear their feedback on our ideas and share final recommendations. Meetings will be noticed on the GEO website and are open to the public. A list of suggested outreach opportunities will be developed by the working group. It is anticipated that most outreach will take place at already scheduled meetings of key stakeholders.
- **Partner:** While recognizing that each state may want to create space for state-specific issues, the resources of the Gulf of Maine are shared and will benefit from joint learning, regional collaboration and participation beyond state borders. The working group will proactively engage with NH, MA and federal agencies on issues related to shared resources.
- **Review and Catalog References:** At the request and guidance of the working group, staff and/or contractor will collect, review and catalog existing reports, studies and plans to assist the working group with its work. We will draw on existing data, strategies and lessons learned from other places similar to Maine and collate them in a shared space for easy access.
- **Assess Maine’s Existing Tools for OSW, Environment, and Wildlife:** At the guidance of the working group, a contractor and/or staff will identify what is and isn’t covered in existing Maine law (e.g., NRPA and Site Law), as well as any data or information needs. The working group will evaluate and consider this information, as well as technical and scientific expertise and input from stakeholders, experts, and agencies.
- **Develop Plan to Improve:** Based on findings from 4 and 5, identify and prioritize recommendations in the immediate, near term (through 2025) and long term (2026-2040). These could include:
 - Data, Information, Research, and R&D/Innovation Needs
 - Leadership, Program and Partnership Opportunities
 - Funding Opportunities – state and other
 - Communication, Outreach and Education Needs
 - Policies, Laws, Regulations



For the purposes of this working group:

“Environmental” refers to important habitats in the subtidal, intertidal, and upland that may be reduced, fragmented, or degraded; underwater and above water noise; and carbon emissions/pollution associated with OSW activities.

Expected Meeting Schedule

The meetings are grouped into two primary phases. The first phase, August–December 2021, will focus on initial recommendations for immediate action to inform future development including identifying siting criteria and prioritizing monitoring needs. The second phase, January–June 2022, will focus more broadly on strategic long-term needs including recommended practices to minimize/mitigate impacts, priorities for the research consortium, regulatory and policy needs, and future dialogue. There are deliberate opportunities for working jointly with the Fisheries Working Group to share, develop and refine recommendations.

(Meetings may be in-person and/or virtual. The schedule below shows Advisory Committee meetings as well as Working Group meetings)*

*July 14, 2021 – Initial Advisory Committee (AC) Meeting #1

- Foundational meeting and orientation to Maine’s Offshore Wind Roadmap

July 29, 2021 – Working Group Meeting #1

- Overview of Maine’s Offshore Wind Roadmap
- Outline role and deliverables of Working Group
- Refine and prioritize Working Group deliverables and work plan
- Establish list of topics, speakers, key questions for mutual learning
- Review and provide feedback on information the Working Group needs to do its work

September 15, 2021 – Working Group Meeting #2

- Confirm workplan and schedule
- Get input on list of technical/staff needs
- Review lessons learned on locating a site for Research Array process by DMR
- Joint Learning: How BOEM process works and what data is used – experience from RI, MA or NY

September 29, 2021 – Working Group Meeting #3

Siting criteria

- Discuss framework/criteria for siting that avoids to the extent possible areas of high ecological value based on siting criteria discussed at meeting
- Breakout into three ad-hoc subgroups: above water, pelagic and below water

*October 6, 2021 – Advisory Committee Meeting #2

- Review and feedback on Working Group progress to date – guidance to co-chairs

October 20, 2021 - Working Group Meeting #4

Data Priorities

- Based upon the framework, identify priority data needs to support Wind Energy Area identification in the Gulf of Maine

November 10, 2021 – Working Group Meeting #5

Continue to refine data priorities



- Review technical studies/compilation of data/gaps analysis on data,
- Discusses multi-taxa survey efforts
- Prepare draft recommendations

Late November, 2021 – Joint Meeting with Fisheries Working Group

- Share, discuss and integrate criteria/standards for siting recommendations and data needs between the two working groups

December 1, 2021 – Working Group Meeting #6

- Refine package of draft recommendation on data needs and criteria/standards for siting

*December 14, 2021 – Advisory Committee Meeting #3

- Presentations by Working Groups of draft strategies with outline of overall direction and the types of recommendations being considered
- Review proactive public and stakeholder engagement plan

January 2022 – Working Group Meeting #7

Recommended Practices

- Review of options used elsewhere
- Understanding consideration of developers
- Discuss draft guidelines and tools for development that minimizes/mitigates impact (in subgroups)
- Discuss environmental considerations for the offshore export cable, cable landfall, and onshore infrastructure
- Input on public and stakeholder engagement efforts

February 2022 – Working Group Meeting #8

Continue to discuss Recommended Practices

- Present draft of minimization actions, provide evidence on efficacy of the actions, ask EW Working Group members prioritize minimization actions, and identify those that require further study (this would be viewed as a starting point for future work)

March 2022 – Working Group Meeting #9

Research Consortium

- Discuss research priorities for state Research Consortium
- Continue development of final draft recommendations

*March 30, 2022 – Advisory Committee Meeting #4

- Review public and stakeholder engagement

April 2022 – Working Group Meeting #10

Regulatory Options

- Provide input on areas where state action is recommended based on internal state review of existing applicable state and federal regulations (focus on CZMA, BOEM process, and state law)
- Review public and stakeholder engagement feedback on initial recommendations
- Continue development of final draft recommendations

May 2022 – Working Group Meeting #11

Future Directions

- Discuss future directions, including broader research needs (apart from baseline data needs) to monitor and detect impacts and broader ecosystem monitoring.
- Finalize recommendations to Advisory Committee.



***June 7, 2022 – Advisory Committee Meeting #5**

- Final Working Group recommendations for Roadmap presented to Advisory Committee

***September 21, 2022 – Advisory Committee Meeting #6**

- Refining draft Roadmap based on public and stakeholder feedback

***November 16, 2022 – Advisory Committee Meeting #7**

- Final refinements of Roadmap document

How the Advisory Committee and Working Groups Will Work Together

The Advisory Committee is a high-level strategic body that will provide guidance on the Roadmap development, including orientation to the four Working Groups.

The Working Groups will use the substantive expertise of its members, together with technical consultant support, to develop the core content of the Roadmap.

Advisory Committee	Working Groups
Initial Months	
Review and refine: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall Roadmap development process • Initial outline of Roadmap content and Working Group deliverables to create that content • Overview of planned consultant and technical support • Overall public and stakeholder engagement strategy • Equity framework for the Working Groups to use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm specific deliverables and work plan • Request additional background information needed • Provide input as needed on consultant work • Begin workplan steps to develop draft strategies • Refine and guide specific targeted stakeholder engagement and outreach
Middle Months	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive updates from Working Groups • Provide guidance and problem-solve as needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-chairs brief the Advisory Committee and bring questions • Prepare draft strategies • Integrate stakeholder feedback
Final Months	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist GEO to review and consolidate Working Group strategies into a draft Roadmap document • Review public input and assist GEO to finalize Roadmap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a revised package of final draft strategies to the Advisory Committee



Role of the Co-Chairs – Advisory Committee and Working Groups

Advisory Committee co-chairs

- Provide a leadership voice for the Roadmap effort
- Promote clear objectives and principles
- Work with staff and facilitators to prepare meetings and key documents
- Oversee follow up with AC members if they miss meetings
- Work with members and other stakeholders to address challenges that might arise

Working Group Co-Chairs

- Provide a leadership voice for the Working Group, promoting clear objectives and principles
- Work with staff and facilitators to prepare meetings and key documents, as well as approve all meeting summaries
- Oversee follow up with WG members if they miss meetings
- Brief the Advisory Committee (of which they are members) periodically on Working Group progress and challenges. Attend Advisory Committee meetings.
- Work with WG members and other stakeholders to address challenges that might arise

Governance and Decision-Making by the Advisory Committee and Working Groups

The Advisory Committee and Working Groups are advisory bodies set up to assist GEO in the development of a robust Offshore Wind Roadmap for Maine. As such, they are not decision-making entities for the Roadmap itself.

The committee and groups will strive to reach consensus in their recommendations to GEO. Consensus is defined by broad agreement among members: all or nearly all members can live with the proposed recommendation. Consensus is also defined by the process as well as the outcome of group deliberation. Thus, the groups will seek to articulate and explore members' interests and concerns, creatively develop ideas and options, seek to meet the needs and concerns of members to the greatest extent possible, and problem-solve in the face of disagreement. Consensus on the final slate of recommendations does not suggest all members will be equally satisfied with the outcomes nor prefer each and every recommendation. Rather, a consensus indicates that the slate of recommendations in total advances the public interest and well-being of the citizens of Maine to the greatest extent it can.

If the groups cannot reach consensus on specific issues, despite their best efforts, they will note the different viewpoints on these issues in their package of recommendations to GEO.

