

**Mid-Atlantic Offshore Wind Regional Collaboration
2021 Work Plan and 2020 Progress Report
Progress Period: January 2020 - December 2020**

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GOALS and OBJECTIVES

There is extensive state and federal activity related to planning and siting offshore wind (OW) in the Mid-Atlantic. It is recognized that the Biden Administration has made OW a priority as part of their climate agenda, through Executive Order 14008, Sec 207. An offshore wind energy focused group will provide a forum for interested MACO members to share and receive information about meetings and decision points related to offshore wind in the Mid-Atlantic, identify potential collaborative activities as needed, and engage with interested stakeholders from time to time. The Mid-Atlantic Offshore Wind Regional Collaborative (OWRC) will work with the OMDT to identify data needs and how to obtain those data, will compile information about best practices and identify issues that would benefit from closer collaboration that are not already being addressed by other offshore wind working groups in the region. In addition, the OWRC is committed to working with MACO to support its commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ) and seek to incorporate DEIJ objectives into its work.

Much of the work conducted by the Mid-Atlantic Offshore Wind Regional Collaboration will build on Section 2.4.2 in the 2016 Ocean Action Plan (“...facilitate greater collaboration around ocean energy issues in the Mid-Atlantic”) by creating a forum for regular inter-agency discussion around offshore wind development in the region. Additionally, the Collaboration’s work relates to Action 4 of the Ocean Energy chapter in the 2016 Ocean Action Plan: “...use the Data Portal to enhance access to data, environmental reports, and proposed offshore wind development activities.” For example: there are currently extensive data requests related to offshore wind, and agency coordination to boost the Portal for use as a resource could help address these.

ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1

Description: Convene regular calls, approximately bi-monthly, to facilitate inter-agency information exchange that may include:

- Identification of topical areas/needs for regular discussion, and timely topics requiring more in-depth discussion;
- Identification of research and data needs, including those that can be communicated to the OMDT;
- Updates from entities involved in offshore wind;
- Identification of opportunities for collaboration and to work across organizational lines;
- Timing of federal and/or state public input opportunities (both for input from MACO entities and public) -- incorporate in MARCO event calendar;
- Identification of potential webinar topics and other stakeholder engagement opportunities as needed; and
- As agreed, work together to provide substantive input on specific offshore wind data topics as needed.

Non-work group members may be invited to participate on these bi-monthly calls for topic-focused discussions, or additional calls may be scheduled as needed (for example, fisheries and related issues).

Stakeholder Involvement Scope and rationale

Members of the OWRC will build on input received from the previous Ocean Forum and other webinars and stakeholder engagement as described above, and will coordinate with the Steering Committee and Forum Planning Team in planning Regional Ocean Forum. The work group will also pursue additional opportunities for webinars and other stakeholder engagement. (See Activity 2.) The work group will seek to engage diverse groups in its outreach efforts as outlined in the MACO DEIJ statement.

Progress Report (January 2020 - June 2020)

The work group meetings/calls meetings held on: February 11, 2020; April 14, 2020; and June 25, 2020. During these meetings, work group members provided agency updates, identified areas for potential collaboration with offshore wind efforts in the region, identified webinar topics for pursuit and planning, and reviewed feedback from the 2020 Mid-Atlantic Ocean Forum, tracked offshore wind developments in the region.

Progress Report (June 2020-December 2020)

The work group meetings/calls were held on September 9, and December 3, 2020. During these meetings, work group members have provided agency updates, identified areas for potential collaboration with offshore wind efforts in the region, identified webinar topics for pursuit and planning, and reviewed feedback from the 2020 Mid-Atlantic Ocean Forum, tracked offshore wind developments in the region.

Proposed Issues / Activities for 2021

Continue to convene regular calls to facilitate inter-agency information exchange as described above.

ACTIVITY 2

Description

Develop and host periodic webinars or other outreach activities as identified by the members of the OWRC. Topics may include:

- Status of current efforts and public outreach related to planning for and following up on the Regional Ocean Forum;
- Information regarding offshore wind development, siting, management, and technology;
- Regular stakeholder updates to be provided as needed

Stakeholder Involvement Scope and rationale

These webinars will either be open to the public and/or targeted to relevant and diverse interested groups. The OWRC will seek to provide opportunities for stakeholder input and during each webinar.

Progress Report (January 2020 - June 2020)

The work group has identified several topic-areas of interest for future webinars. Planning is underway, and it is anticipated that the first webinar will be held in early fall 2020, which will review Port Access Route Studies (PARS) and other routing studies, and how these relate to offshore wind development.

Progress Report (June 2020-December 2020)

The work group convened a public webinar on October 8, 2020 featuring presentations and discussion among the USCG representatives, OWRC members, on others on port access and navigation safety studies along the Atlantic Coast. The OWRC collaborated with the Maritime Navigation work group and the Data Portal in organizing this webinar. The webinar proceedings were posted on the MACO website. The OWRC collaborated with NROC to plan a series of 3 webinars in 2021 on topics relating to transmission of offshore wind energy to land and incorporation into the energy grid.

Proposed Issues / Activities for 2021

- Offshore Wind Energy Transmission webinar series January 29, February 5 and 12.
- Support for Regional Ocean Forum planning May 2021
- Other topical webinars, outreach TBD

ACTIVITY 3

Description

OWRC will continue to work with MARCO to develop a shared calendar of events (e.g. BOEM Information Exchanges, state activities, major activities of the other offshore wind groups). The calendar will be posted on the MARCO website. Members of the OWRC will also share internal events deadlines as necessary.

Stakeholder Involvement Scope and rationale

The calendar will be posted to the MARCO website. This activity will involve regular coordination between the members of the Mid-Atlantic Offshore Wind Collaboration and other entities as appropriate to identify relevant events.

Progress Report (January 2020 - December 2020)

Relevant events are regularly posted and updated on the MARCO calendar.

Proposed Issues / Activities for 2021

- Maintain a calendar and share information broadly.

ACTIVITY 4

Description

Facilitate information exchange and coordination as needed with other regional offshore wind groups.

Stakeholder Involvement Scope and rationale

The OWRC will identify which external groups should be included within this effort.

Progress Report (January 2020 - December 2020)

The work group met on a regular, approximately bi-monthly, basis and efforts to coordinate with other regional entities on offshore wind are underway.

The work group reached out to RODA, ROSA, Regional Wildlife entity, NYSERDA, and MARACOOS and discussed the need to meet periodically and continue to keep track of ongoing activities in order to share information, including regional science priorities and to avoid duplication of effort.

Proposed Issues / Activities for 2021

- Continue to meet periodically with RODA, ROSA, Regional Wildlife entity, NYSERDA, MARACOOS representatives and other groups as needed to share information, identify science priorities and avoid duplication of effort.