



New England Fishery Management Council

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C.M. "Rip" Cunningham, Jr., *Chairman* | Paul J. Howard, *Executive Director*

November 20, 2012

Mary Boatman  
Renewable Energy Environmental Studies Chief  
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management  
United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management  
Washington, DC 20240-0001


Dear Dr. Boatman,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on BOEM's upcoming environmental studies initiatives. The New England Fishery Management Council has worked with BOEM's renewable energy staff over the past two years to provide our technical expertise in terms of research needed to improve understanding of offshore wind/fisheries interactions. Brian Hooker has been very helpful in terms of communicating information about funding that has been awarded. In general, we strongly support studies that will increase understanding of how wind energy construction and operation activities affect marine species and habitats on which fisheries depend. Specifically, we are aware of pending awards related to transmission line impacts on marine species and vessel communications, as well as continuing work to characterize baseline benthic habitat conditions.

In addition to concerns about biological/ecological impacts to managed species and their habitats, the Council also is concerned with issues of continued fishery access and economic impacts. In this regard, we are pleased that BOEM is conducting workshops to help develop measures to mitigate conflicts between offshore wind and fisheries, and we are aware of recently awarded socio-economic impact assessment work that will evaluate the potential impacts of wind energy development on commercial fisheries. We are encouraged that BOEM appears to be taking a wide view of potential issues when funding research.

We do not have any additional specific study proposals for your consideration at this time, but hope you will continue to inform us of BOEM-funded initiatives relevant to fisheries impact assessments and we will continue to provide our technical expertise on these matters when possible. Two of my staff, Deputy Director Chris Kellogg and Fishery Analyst, Michelle Bachman will continue to serve as points of contact on offshore wind issues, so please feel free to communicate with them directly.

Sincerely,

  
Paul J. Howard  
Executive Director