MEETING SUMMARY

Habitat Advisory Panel
Mansfield, MA
April 3, 2018

The Advisory Panel met to recommend management alternatives for the Clam Dredge Framework and discuss Council engagement in offshore wind development.

MEETING ATTENDANCE: Chris McGuire (Chairman), Ron Smolowitz, Jeff Kaelin, David Wallace, Meghan Lapp; Michelle Bachman, Rachel Feeney (NEFMC staff); Peter Hughes and Scott Olszewski (Habitat Committee members). In addition, eight members of the public attended including Louis Legace, clam harvester/vessel owner; Dominic Santoro, mussel harvester/vessel owner; Chad Brayton, Enoch MacDonough, and Chris Shriver, Atlantic Capes Fisheries; Allen Rencurrel, Nantucket Sound Seafood.

There was no quorum for the meeting (the Habitat AP has twelve members total and five were able to attend). The discussion was nonetheless very productive. Outcomes should be understood as consensus statements of the members who were present.

KEY OUTCOMES:

The Habitat Advisory Panel members present recommend by consensus that an exemption for the mussel dredge fishery should be considered in this framework. AP members suggest designing a single suite of exemption area alternatives and identifying mussel dredge gear exemptions as a sub-option for each. AP members want to maintain momentum on this action and continue to meet needed deadlines (June alternatives for analysis, September final action) for implementation early April 2019.

The Habitat Advisory Panel members present recommend by consensus that the Council consider exempting clam dredge gear throughout the GSC HMA, except in the northeast and southeast corners and in a strip of deep water along the eastern boundary. The northeastern area is the mobile bottom-tending gear closure previously identified by Council. The southeastern area is a rectangle that extends from the southeastern corner of the HMA north to 40° 56’ N and west to 69° 40’ W. The strip of deep water is bounded by the eastern edge of the HMA. The western boundary of this area begins at 41° 15’ N, 69° 27.5’ W, and runs southeast parallel to the HMA boundary until it reaches 41° N, 69° 21’ W, and then extends south to 40° 56’ N, 69° 21’ W.
The group recommended specific strategies for Council and fishing industry engagement in offshore wind development, as follows:

- The Council is well suited to serve an information dissemination role (i.e. developing a fishery focused offshore wind page on its website, encouraging NMFS to conduct direct outreach to permit holders).
- The Council may have a role as a convener of fishing industry members, recognizing the challenges associated with holding public meetings. There is a need for engagement at multiple levels and the fishing industry should consider forming its own groups to discuss these issues and formulate advice and comments. AP members challenged the industry to convene their own expert coastwide group to provide advice. A communication tool such as a social network or listserv would also be helpful to connect industry members.
- AP members support an overarching, coastwide and cumulative analysis of fishery data that will help identify major issues. As a next step, the Council and stakeholders can drill down to flesh out detailed issues. This drilling down could include focused meetings to engage stakeholders related to a particular location or topic.
- The Council should comment that the Magnuson Stevens Act and Council system were designed to protect American fishing grounds for American fishermen, but now the U.S. government is leasing those grounds mostly to foreign investors.
- Council comments should emphasize that the oceans produce sustainable protein and are part of our nation’s strategic food supply and food security.
- The Council should understand and emphasize distinctions between the BOEM leasing and development processes for oil and gas vs offshore wind, e.g. there are clearer mechanisms for compensation in the oil and gas process.
- The Council should request that mitigation and compensation should be addressed in the event that gear is damaged or fishing time is lost as a result of offshore wind installations.

**Clam Framework Discussion**

Ms. Bachman provided some background information on the clam framework, including the problem statement/underlying goals and objectives of the Omnibus EFH Amendment, a detailed summary of data available to support the framework, and an expected timeline for the action. During the presentation she referred to the maps prepared to summarize the data and well as the PDT meeting summaries.

Ron Smolowitz asked if the PDT was wrestling with the same issue that he was – that the highest fishing effort occurs in the most complex bottom, suggesting that fishing effort is increasing productivity. Ms. Bachman said the PDT was aware of the correspondence between complex habitat and clam dredging effort, but that the PDT would not attribute the presence of complex habitat to hydraulic dredging. Seafloor features including high percent cover of epifauna and gravel pavements coincide with dredged areas, indicating that these features persist in the presence of fishing activity. However, the potential condition of these habitats in the absence of fishing is not known. The PDT was uncomfortable recommending specific exemption areas to the Committee because complex features are distributed throughout the habitat management area (HMA). There do not appear to be large areas where complex habitats are absent that would have easily lent themselves to designation as clam dredge exemption areas that do not have adverse effects on habitat.
Mr. Smolowitz followed up that there’s a lot of literature over the past 150 years that suggests working the sand bottom increases productivity. He commented that he brought references to PDT meeting 10 years ago. The PDT was only looking at adverse impacts, so that literature was excluded. He suggested that working a clam bed doubles production. On cod use of habitat, same thing as on Northern Edge. Some of the most important habitat is shallow water, 3-21 feet. There’s a movement of cod through the area. I don’t believe that complex habitat increases survival. Juvenile cod school for survival. That’s the decision. I don’t see evidence. The idea of rotational fishing as an ecological net positive. There is a solid literature on edge effects. None of that is being taken into consideration.

Referencing the clam industry proposed alternative, David Wallace focused on the upper northeast corner of the HMA, the most complex area. The northeast corner is so rough, that we can’t fish in it. We can fish in small discrete areas. He argued that the exclusion of dredging from northeast corner should be counted in the industry’s favor in terms of the percentage of the HMA closed to clam dredging. The PDT originally proposed closing the shoals because there were scallops and groundfish in the Great South Channel. We are in a difficult situation, except that fortunately the Council says that we have to worry about OY. We are going to protest as much as we can. We are making a huge mountain out of a mole hill. Unfortunate and outrageous. This is not a highly complex area. The complexity gets covered up on the next tide. We have proposed to close 100 square miles on the southern end of the HMA, because we don’t fish there. It’s a reasonable consideration. We should fish everywhere we can.

Ms. Bachman shared Mr. Wallace’s proposal on the screen. She agreed that the issue of baselines was a tricky one. Certainly, habitat protections in the northeast corner of the HMA helps the Council achieve adverse effects minimization objectives.

Mr. Wallace commented that when the Council passed the habitat amendment, this vote was remarkable; 6 in favor, 5 against, 7 abstained. I was flabbergasted. The Council didn’t like this in the first place. I’ve been asking the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council to say stop managing clams, because New England doesn’t want them to manage scallops. We are getting beat up, because we are the kids from the south. In one year, these guys here will be out of business. Their boats are too small to go to GB. How are we going to protect a fishery that generates $700M? Atlantic Capes has 200-300 people processing clams. They will need to find new jobs.

The Chair emphasized that he would like to use this body for input. We don’t vote. Our role is to deliver the view of the AP to the Committee. Mr. Wallace agreed, stating that we need to come up with suggestions that balance surfclam OY with habitat objectives. This is a high energy sand shoal.

Meghan Lapp asked whether the habitat amendment had specific objectives around balancing protection with human impacts. Ms. Bachman noted that a core goal was to minimize the adverse impacts of fishing on EFH to the extent practicable. Practicability implies a balance between human impacts and conservation goals. The goal that we never realized through OHA2 was defining metrics for how much habitat protection is enough.
Ms. Lapp noted on practicability that no one wants to have 10% of their income taken away. That’s not practicable. Looking at the coral action as an example, the red crab fisherman would have lost 100% of income without an exemption. In the context of the image-based habitat data in the HMA, she asked whether there were any repeated stations that would show change in habitat conditions over time. Ms. Bachman responded that in the early days of the SMAST survey, they had “fixed” stations, and then they were staggered, but even the fixed station locations were not sufficiently precise to look at exactly the same piece of bottom across multiple years.

Ms. Lapp emphasized that Nantucket Shoals is a high current area. Boats don’t go there because of shifting sand banks. It would be interesting to see how much things stay static. They are sandy shoals. This exemption area decision is about preservation of groundfish stocks, but the discussion should be more about offshore energy, which is shaping up to be very widespread [and could impact fisheries and fish stocks]. I’d be more concerned about the impacts of windfarms on cod in this vicinity. The operational noise of the farm raises stress levels. At the Recreational Fishing Summit in Washington, DC, people there said they fished for cod every winter around the Block Island Wind Farm, but this year there was no cod. Almost a million acres are directly slated for wind farms. What is that going to do to fish stocks?

Jeff Kaelin said he asked a long time ago, how can you project an impact on productivity? We still don’t have that data. When SCEMFIS designed the [August 2017 clam dredge] survey, one of the key pieces was is there biota on the structure to create a refuge? Does this area afford protection for cod? The survey results match the sheer stress figure (high flow areas have lots of clams). This area is a constant sandstorm. We never dragged in here, when I was fishing out of Point Judith. I don’t see this as important cod habitat. The NOAA ships Albatross and Bigelow don’t go in there. No catches of cod in there either. I’m struggling with habitat amendment goal to design a metric [for how much habitat conservation is needed]. We don’t have a metric. I did vote for this exemption. I wanted to find a way for the industry to operate. Can you comment on the SSC discussion? I heard them saying that the dredge surveys are additional points of information. They said that we need more information, image-based analysis. Is there a way to use this as a habitat research area? And not eliminate the fishery. Is there cod bycatch by the gear?

Ms. Bachman commented that there was SSC agreement that we need to take the image and dredge info as snapshots. The gears are sampling differently, and the surveys weren’t designed to be compared. The SSC sub-panel’s report is forthcoming.

The group discussed Mr. Wallace’s proposal to keep the northeast and southeast corners of the HMA closed, and the rest accessible to clam dredges. Mr. Kaelin asked why the southeast box was drawn the way it was. Mr. Wallace responded that the area is deep water, >25 fathoms. We find quahogs deeper than that, and these boats are fishing for surfclams. Mr. Smolowitz confirmed if there was clamming in those areas before, suggesting that the area could be a baseline for research.

Audience comments
Peter Hughes – In the universe of fisheries that take place here, what percentage of their revenue comes from this area? Ms. Bachman said that this is something we can explain more fully. Revenue by gear is summarized in the habitat amendment and put into a regional context in that EIS. We know that scallops are not really caught at these depths, but there is some groundfish effort. Mr. Hughes responded that outside of cod age 0-1 on the west side of the HMA, everything else (fish distribution) seems to be in the east, in the Great South Channel, where other fisheries are active. He also suggested that depths be reported in fathoms, although Mr. Legace said feet would make more sense at these shallow depths.

Louis Legace said that closure of the GSC HMA would be a huge impact economically for both big companies and especially small ones that derive their entire business from this area (like him, since 1982). I own the F/V Mariette but was also the captain and owner of another vessel. I have a lot of experience here. My captain is my son. My only child. That’s all he knows. We are all RI residents. We derive our entire income from this area. We go in there all the time because it’s the only place we can go. It’s a nightmare to fish. We sometimes scrape bottom. The mid-Atlantic captains hate the place and can’t wait to get out. My boat was used on the survey with Mann and Powell. They didn’t find evidence of complex habitat. What I do see that this isn’t really EFH. This area doesn’t really matter.

Chad Brayton commented that he ran Louis’ boat a long time. Been clamming since 2001. I understand conservation, but I have concerns about achieving goals. Understand this area. Right where you are thinking of closing 4-5 knot tides, won’t get the habitat in the war zone. The water is intense. We have family experience of an uncle losing a dredge. A week later it was covered with sand. A week later, it was uncovered and we got it back. You wouldn’t believe it until you actually see it. Clams don’t migrate – we are done if we can’t go in there. We only use a third of the bottom. In NJ, you can tow for 40 min and catch clams all the time. Here, we make 3-6 minute tows. Our footprint in this area is small. In trying to produce evidence, we put our plotters on the table (which are sacred). (These plotter data are in the 2016 Powell et al. report).

Chris Shriver commented that we have several hundred people we work with. Several hundred people looking to lose their jobs. Let’s give the best information we can. We have compassion for the environment.

Advisory Panel discussion

Mr. Kaelin asked what’s going to happen when the lightship closed area goes away? What do you expect to see south? Anything positive?

Mr. Wallace responded that it will depend on vessel size. Louis’ boat works out of New Bedford. Some of the smaller boats work out of Hyannis (vessel size restriction for their town dock). A small boat in the open ocean is risky. Clam vessels are the most vulnerable when loaded. Take a beating in winter. In summer, due to the heat, there’s a time limit to get back to the plant. Maybe 30 hours dock to dock. Short boats go slow. A 70-foot boat can make 8 knots. If they are going 100 miles, they don’t have much time to fish. So, they have to fish where they are due to those limits. The big boats can’t go to the GSC HMA, because the shoals. There may be some clams
down there in Nantucket. We don’t know if the large boats will go there. Would need to be refrigerated boats.

Mr. Kaelin asked about depth of surf clam distribution. Outside 25 fathoms, there won’t be fishing? So there’s no opportunity to go south, will be limited by depth? Mr. Wallace commented that we might find quahogs there. He said that we are finding surfclams migrating into the quahog grounds, because of water temperature changes.

Mr. Smolowitz suggested looking at seal distributions – seals love to eat cod. The approach is to ban the gear from the area because there might be an impact. That’s backwards. There should be a research program. An RSA that addresses habitat concerns.

Mr. Kaelin reminded the group that the MAFMC isn’t currently using RSAs at all. However, the clam industry paid for the surveys. We have half a dozen companies contributing. The cart is before the horse here. Trying to disprove a negative.

Mr. Santoro was asked to describe the mussel fishery. Historically, there was a fishery here in the 1980s, a few boats. That’s why there is an exemption area. Don’t need a permit or have to submit VTRs. Fishery ended in the late 80s. Big storms that covered over the beds, and imports were on the rise. Product from Chile. No economic driver to go fishing. There have been mussels there, but no incentive. I’ve been harvesting in town waters since the 1990s. The Cape Cod Bay fishery has been going on the last 7 years, for me for 5 years. I’ve been going to same area, same square mile. Enormous amount of product, 100,000 bushels a year, in a very small space. We drag for 30 seconds to a minute, and we catch a lot of product. Use a 6-ft steel frame with bag. Pretty easy to pinpoint. Processing mussels on the boat by running them through a declumper. Juveniles are released.

Mr. Wallace asked that in the SCMFIS survey, they ran into mussels, but on sand in mats. The mat moves with the tide. Do you see that? Mr. Santoro said that there are not a lot of tide or storm effects. Not a lot of movement. It’s a good thing for us to stay in the same area. Since 1980s, we’ve been importing most of our mussels. I put everything I have into the mussel fishery. I employ 10 people year-round and a few more seasonally. We are creating something new. Would cut down on reliance on imports. This is an opportunity. He said he wanted to go out and further assess the mussel resource in the area.

The group discussed a path forward for the mussel fishery in this framework action. Mr. Smolowitz suggested simply adding mussel dredge exemptions to any alternatives. Others were concerned about tying the clam dredge alternatives to the mussel fishery. After additional discussion, the following consensus statement was approved:

The Habitat Advisory Panel members recommend by consensus that an exemption for the mussel dredge fishery should be considered in this framework. AP members suggest designing a single suite of exemption area alternatives and identifying mussel dredge gear exemptions as a sub-option for each. AP members want to maintain momentum on this action and continue to meet needed deadlines (June alternatives for analysis, September final action) for implementation early April 2019.
The panel went back to discussing Mr. Wallace’s proposal. Mr. Smolowitz suggested adding the eastern edge of the HMA as well, because it’s deep and that’s where the boulders are. The industry members present agreed with Mr. Smolowitz’s suggestion.

The following consensus statement was approved:

The Habitat Advisory Panel members present recommend by consensus that the Council consider exempting clam dredge gear throughout the GSC HMA, except in the northeast and southeast corners and in a strip of deep water along the eastern boundary. The northeastern area is the mobile bottom-tending gear closure previously identified by Council. The southeastern area is a rectangle that extends from the southeastern corner of the HMA north to 40° 56’ N and west to 69° 40’ W. The strip of deep water is bounded by the eastern edge of the HMA. The western boundary of this area begins at 41° 15’ N, 69° 27.5’ W, and runs southeast parallel to the HMA boundary until it reaches 41° N, 69° 21’ W, and then extends south to 40° 56’ N, 69° 21’ W.
Mr. Smolowitz suggested that the industry identify an additional area that they don’t expect to fish for 3-5 years and make a proposal for a rotational closure. There are some areas of undersized clams that are worth keeping closed. This could make the proposal more attractive.

Mr. Kaelin asked about the triangle of overlap with the NLCA that hasn’t been fished. That research concept is still in my head. What’s missing is a demonstration that the fishery has had adverse impacts and how to minimize the adverse impacts. The SSC panel raised the issue of needing more data. Is there a way to create a research program?

The group discussed that the clam fishery already has self-regulating closures in the Mid-Atlantic to protect small clams.

Finally, the group discussed what would happen to the vessels that fish in the area if it does close completely. Mr. Wallace said quahog vessels carry 3000-6000 bushels in a trip. Average vessel on Nantucket is 400-600 bushels per trip. Louis’ boat can carry a little more. Difference is getting $20 for clams or $7 for quahogs. Small vessels can catch quahogs faster than clams, but can’t generate enough money, if they could even find a market. Louis’ boat might go to the Mid, which might exacerbate effort on small clams there. Having access to Nantucket takes 25% of landings off of the Mid. It is possible that they could increase production on GB, but small boats don’t have the capacity. Not big enough, not refrigerated, can’t afford the testing.

Offshore Wind Discussion

Ms. Bachman provided an update, noting that she was engaged with Jessica Coakley from the MAFMC and an entire team at NMFS to track and comment on offshore wind issues. The Council can use NMFS channels including the EFH consultation process to provide feedback. Critical issues are approval of construction and operations plans and development of EIS documents (Vineyard Wind being the first of these), development of new lease areas offshore New York (NY Bight), and eventually the “path forward”, which is planned to be a comprehensive look at any additional potential lease areas. On the New York areas, she understands that BOEM only wants to lease 20% of what is going to be suggested as potential areas in the request for information. The fishing industry should provide input on which areas shouldn’t be leased.

The Council can serve as a place for the industry to get questions addressed, and an offshore wind landing page is planned for the NEFMC website. AP members should pass along idea for what to include there. She asked if there was interested in a workshop later this year or in early 2019 convened by the Councils to identify fishing industry perspectives and advice on offshore wind development.

The group discussed state-based vs. regional coordination efforts. MA and RI have been very active here and are trying to convene an offshore wind science panel. There is still much to work out in terms of who would staff it and where the money would come from. Ms. Bachman noted that she had heard concerns expressed about regional-level vs. coastwide coordination, but on the other hand, there are enough issues at the scale of southern New England.
Ms. Lapp agreed with more of a coastwide approach to coordination on science issues. Fisheries in federal waters aren’t regional. Looking at issues fishery by fishery is more appropriate. Doing studies in a smaller way will miss the cumulative impacts. A lot of these projects are being looked at in a vacuum. There needs to be a whole new cumulative impacts analysis. BOEM won’t do the work on their EISs. They will pull together generic analyses. I have banged this drum for a long time. BOEM doesn’t have to take NMFS or Coast Guard recommendation, although at least if NMFS provides recommendations, that’s something.

The group then discussed the development process and whether they felt the fishing industry was being heard. Ms. Smolowitz commented that the “Smart from the Start” planning approach eliminated everything that would have held up the process. He commented that he’d met with multiple developers to make suggestions, but that no input is taken in a meaningful way. I’d like the NEFMC to make a similar motion to the one the Mid-Atlantic made in February 2018 to not support any new proposals until we have more information in place. The Council Chairs need to take these concerns to the Secretary of Commerce. To the point of creating a scientific group, a colleague of mine went to a meeting where they were told that steel would go in the water in 2020. Too bad for those wanting baseline research. If we don’t put the brakes on this, the science will be meaningless.

Mr. McGuire agreed with the need to do coastwide cumulative impacts analysis. Whose job should that be? Ms. Lapp responded that she wasn’t sure, but that there seems to be a lot of data that could be used right now to address these issues. Ms. Bachman noted that while it is BOEM’s responsibility to do the work, they have thus far not considered cumulative impacts in a meaningful way.

The group then discussed the price of wind energy and the pace of development. Dave Wallace said that had spent a lot of time talking to developers only to see no changes in their position. The surveys are not adequate to assess effects on fisheries. We are just going to get run over. Scallops and clams don’t move, so those industries need to be able to fish between them. Someone needs to tell the Secretary of Interior to tell BOEM to use real science. The executive order mandating that decisions occur of an 18-month timeframe should be rescinded.

The chair asked what are the actionable things that staff and the Committee can take forward?

Mr. Smolowitz suggested that the task at hand is to determine what’s the role of the Council and staff. BOEM is both a regulator and promoter…they have no interest in regulating. He is working on the MA/RI science panel group but is against a science panel having a lead – the guidance needs to come from a policy body. We need a forum to get the fishermen together. This is a wind industry to fishing industry problem. The Council could be a sponsor of a fishery working group. Wind turbines are driving people insane on land because of the infrasound, but no one is researching that on right whales. There needs to be another level of research, not funded by the companies, but by the rate payers, to do monitoring.

Mr. Kaelin suggested that the Council review the brief in the Statoil case. In NJ, the fishing industry has been involved with the new governor’s transition team, but they have been
unimpressed by that administration’s willingness to acknowledge our concerns. I hope that the message from the AP is that the Council should be involved.

Mr. Smolowitz suggested that we lack a good argument on the importance of what’s being generated in a sustainable way, in terms of fisheries production, and if this seafood is not produced off the east coast, where it will come from? The Department of Energy has a $20M effort to develop seaweed farms to produce energy by converting seaweed into methane gas. People don’t understand that we have a four-century old food production industry. Mr. Kaelin noted that they had emphasized the strategic food supply angle with the Trump administration, and Mr. Wallace reminded the group that the Secretary of Commerce said recently that we need to bolster domestic fisheries.

Mr. McGuire summarized that they AP sounds supportive of the Council working in a convening role, emphasizing the importance of sustainable fisheries and fisheries jobs. What other valuable things could happen?

Ms. Lapp recommended that the Council can help emphasize that the MSA protects American fishing for American fishermen. We are now leasing grounds to the very countries that we excluded (Dutch, Germans, Spanish). Defeats the entire purpose of Councils. That’s why we want to be an integral part of this. 50% of my time is spent on wind. There needs to be a high-level look at the data, like what we did to analyze the coral amendment, to identify which fisheries are important to particular areas, and identify the key groups to talk with. This needs big picture coordination. In short, instead of having every developer or state having meetings, have a data product that identifies people who need to be involved, and then have those focused conversations.

The group discussed possible impacts on fish migrations. Mr. Smolowitz commented that recreational fishermen are saying that the cod are gone over the power lines. South of Nantucket, $40M of squid came out of there. What if the cables block squid migrations? Mitigation hasn’t been addressed. If an industry is hurt (lobster catch collapses around turbines) we won’t be able to show that it’s due to the turbines. There is no provision for compensating fishermen.

AP members thought that a clearinghouse of information via the Council webpage would be valuable, and also that NMFS can reach out to potentially affected permit holders through notices.

Mr. Wallace suggested that two Councils should act in unison. Not sure about the state administrators from states supporting wind. Somehow, the industry needs to be heard. Developers are giving lip service, but then ignoring.

Mr. Smolowitz suggested that once an issue is identified, we must work industry to industry. BOEM is not going to restrict the wind industry. States only control where the lines come to shore. Ms. Lapp countered that despite industry-industry meetings, we do need public meetings on the record. We’ve had private meetings, but then our views are misrepresented just a few days later.
Mr. Wallace commented that it’s difficult for the Council to convene a workshop that’s just for fishermen. Maybe we need to think about how the industries can work directly on this – to see if we can come up with a few dollars to sponsor a meeting to come up with all the issues that needs to be addressed, and then give the recommendations to the Council. Mr. Kaelin supported a coastwide industry meeting. This is critically important to our future.

The following recommendations were pulled from this discussion:

- The Council is well suited to serve an information dissemination role (i.e. developing a fishery focused offshore wind page on its website, encouraging NMFS to conduct direct outreach to permit holders).
- The Council may have a role as a convener of fishing industry members, recognizing the challenges associated with holding public meetings. There is a need for engagement at multiple levels and the fishing industry should consider forming its own groups to discuss these issues and formulate advice and comments. AP members challenged the industry to convene their own expert coastwide group to provide advice. A communication tool such as a social network or listserv would also be helpful to connect industry members.
- AP members support an overarching, coastwide and cumulative analysis of fishery data that will help identify major issues. As a next step, the Council and stakeholders can drill down to flesh out detailed issues. This drilling down could include focused meetings to engage stakeholders related to a particular location or topic.
- The Council should comment that the Magnuson Stevens Act and Council system were designed to protect American fishing grounds for American fishermen, but now the U.S. government is leasing those grounds mostly to foreign investors.
- Council comments should emphasize that the oceans produce sustainable protein and are part of our nation’s strategic food supply and food security.
- The Council should understand and emphasize distinctions between the BOEM leasing and development processes for oil and gas vs offshore wind, e.g. there are clearer mechanisms for compensation in the oil and gas process.
- The Council should request that mitigation and compensation should be addressed in the event that gear is damaged or fishing time is lost as a result of offshore wind installations.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.