

For Immediate Release: December 12, 2022

Nine Atlantic Coast States Release Request for Information to Inform Establishment of a Regional Fisheries Compensatory Mitigation Fund Administrator

Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, and Virginia (the States) have been advancing an initiative to establish a regional fund administrator for fisheries compensatory mitigation which would provide financial compensation for economic loss from offshore wind development off the Atlantic Coast. Recognizing the importance of sustaining a vibrant fishing community that can coexist and thrive alongside offshore wind energy development, the States have released a Request for Information (RFI) aimed at receiving input from impacted members of the fishing industry, offshore wind developers, corporate and financial management entities, as well as interested members of the public, to inform efforts to establish a regional fisheries compensatory mitigation fund administrator.

This effort supports the implementation of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's (BOEM) [Draft Fisheries Mitigation Framework](#) in a fair, equitable, and transparent manner for impacted Atlantic Coast fishing industry members and offshore wind developers. The States' RFI seeks feedback on concepts and proposals on how to best establish a single regional administrator for the Atlantic Coast to collect, hold, determine eligibility, and dispense funds for economic losses to affected fishing industry members. The States are focused on ensuring that a regional administrator also engages appropriately with both the fishing and offshore wind industries. To that end, the States developed the RFI and accompanying Scoping Document with input from representatives of the fishing and offshore wind industries, including support from the Responsible Offshore Development Alliance (RODA) and other fishing industry leaders, to help engage with and understand concerns from the broader industry.

Responses to the RFI are **due by 5pm Eastern Standard Time on January 31, 2023**. Visit the following website for additional information and to download the Scoping Document and RFI: <https://offshorewindpower.org/fisheries-mitigation-project>

Kris Ohleth, Director of the Special Initiative on Offshore Wind, can provide contact information for each of the States' representatives for this issue. kris@offshorewindpower.org

Background

Since June 2021, the States have worked closely together, including issuing [a letter to the Biden Administration](#) expressing that the expansion of the offshore wind industry creates an unprecedented opportunity for the United States. The letter emphasized the shared federal-state responsibility to address critical areas of port infrastructure, permitting, research and development, fisheries support, and natural resource restoration and mitigation. Carrying forward this partnership, in November 2021, the States sent [a letter to BOEM](#) to encourage the development of a standardized fisheries compensatory mitigation framework. In June 2022, BOEM issued the draft framework for mitigating impacts to commercial and recreational fisheries.

The Special Initiative on Offshore Wind (SIOW) and the Consensus Building Institute (CBI) have been convening and facilitating the States' discussions on a regional approach to fisheries compensatory mitigation. SIOW and CBI will continue to support this critically important effort as consultation with the fishing and offshore wind development industries continues.



Commonwealth of Virginia
Marine Resources Commission
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Responsible Offshore Development Alliance

Virginia Partners with Fishing Industry to Inform Offshore Wind Compensation Fund Effort

Richmond, VA. Monday, December 12, 2022 – Today, nine Atlantic Coast States released a request for information (RFI) to receive feedback on a regional administrator for fisheries compensatory mitigation from offshore wind development. [[Available here](#)]

The Commonwealth of Virginia acknowledges the great value of the commercial fishing industry and the need for their engagement in potential offshore wind development as early as possible. The Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) is responsible for the management of Virginia’s marine and aquatic resources, including the responsibility to ensure our historic seafood industry is maintained as economically healthy and sustainable. VMRC has been working toward encouraging early avoidance of fisheries resources with the goal of a coexisting relationship between renewable energy development and commercial fishing.

Through the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program, the Commonwealth has supported the Responsible Offshore Development Alliance (RODA) to coordinate a critical group of commercial fisheries advisors to provide initial feedback on the States’ scoping effort and RFI. RODA is a coalition of fishery-dependent companies, associations and community members committed to improving the compatibility of new offshore development with their businesses. RODA is uniquely positioned to facilitate the involvement from the commercial fishing industries in the New England, Mid Atlantic, Gulf of Maine and Pacific regions as they relate to offshore wind development.

“As providers of sustainable seafood, our members are deeply invested in protecting U.S. fisheries and are grateful to the Commonwealth of Virginia for the opportunity to participate in initial discussions of this state-led effort. It is essential that impacted parties have a central role in designing and administering strategies that will most effectively mitigate impacts of offshore wind, and we look forward to continuing to refine an equitable and appropriate compensation strategy,” said **Lane Johnston, Programs Manager at RODA.**

“The commercial fishing community are stewards of their resources and we as Virginians have a responsibility to ensure their equities are considered as we embrace an all-of-the-above energy plan that includes offshore wind. Our goal to ensure the Commonwealth has a reliable, affordable, clean and growing supply of power can be possible while protecting the jobs of our important fishing industry,” said **Acting Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources Travis Voyles.**

It is paramount that the fishing industry, as recipients of any mitigation and compensation strategies, are involved in designing a fair and appropriate regional compensation fund and administration process. The Commonwealth is committed to ensuring the fishing industry is an acknowledged equity throughout the development of offshore wind and through the design process of the RFI. The Commonwealth looks forward to hearing from all industry voices through the RFI comment period.

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