

MERIDIAN INSTITUTE

Moderator: Laura Cantral
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Operator: Hello and welcome to today's webcast. My name is (Janine), and I will be your web event specialist today.

During the presentation we'll have a question-and-answer session. You can ask questions at any time during the presentation by clicking the green Q&A icon in the lower left-hand corner of your screen, typing your question in the open area, and clicking ask to submit. If you would like to view the presentation in a full screen view, click the full screen button in the lower right-hand corner of your screen. Press the escape key on your keyboard to return to your original view.

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It is now my pleasure to turn the webcast over to your facilitator Laura Cantral. The floor is yours.

Laura Cantral: Thank you (Janine) and thanks to all of you who are joining the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body today for this public webinar. On their behalf I welcome you and we're very glad that you're here with us and then taking time to learn about what Mid-Atlantic RPB has been working on over the course of the summer. In particular to learn about some draft documents that it released last week, they are all available on the RPB's website.

And you will be hearing from several member of the RPB about those documents and also about some additional upcoming opportunities to hear from you about this work and to engage in dialog and discussion. So we have an hour for this session, I'm going to quickly run through the objectives and the agenda for this Weimar. And then I'll turn to those members to share some highlights with you before we open it up for some question and insights from those of you who have joined us.

As you can see the objectives that we have for this hour are pretty straight forward, we want to provide update as I've already mentioned, we want to hear from you. There is an opportunity for you to post your questions and comments using the chat feature provided on this webinar. We will be tracking those questions throughout the hour and when we get to later in the session we'll post the question as many of them as we can get to before we have to wrap-up.

And then as I also mentioned we want to tell you that some other upcoming opportunities over the course of November we'll having around the public listening sessions in each Mid-Atlantic state and we encourage your presence and participation in those opportunities as well. So for the agenda as soon as we're done with the agenda review and a few other introductory remarks, we will turn to several members who will give you an overview of several documents. One that outlines options that the RPB is presenting for an ocean action plan, an interim plan for stakeholder engagement, we'll give you a status update on the work underway to conduct a regional ocean assessment as well as some updates on the Mid-Atlantic ocean data portal.

At 1:35 we'll turn it over – we'll open it up for Q&A and as I've mentioned the format for that will be using your chat function. I as a facilitator will post questions that are coming in from members of the public, those of you who are participating, and we will post those questions to the RBP as time allows before we wrap up and adjourn at 2:00 pm.

I also want you to be aware that you have several opportunities for public comment and feedback in additional to taking advantage of the Q&A portion

of today's webinar. Each of the MARCO hosted public listening sessions are also opportunities for you to participate and we encourage you to visit the website and learn about the date and locations for those meetings. All of the documents are also on the website and we're inviting – RPB inviting your written input up till (COB) on November 28th. So please take advantage of all – any and all of those public comment opportunities.

The final thing that I would like to say is some introductory remarks before we move on is for you to be aware of what's going to be posted after this webinar. We will be providing a full reporting of today's webinar, a transcript, the discussion, a record of all the chat questions and comments that come in from the public and a list of webinar participants. So that will be made available to you shortly after this webinar.

So we go to the preliminaries, I would now like to turn it over to Gwynne Schultz with the state of Maryland and the state co-lead for the Regional Planning Body. Gwynne is going to share an overview of RPB activities and the status of the timeline. And Gwynne I want to turn it over to you and then you can hand it off to our next presenter and we'll proceed accordingly.

Gwynne Schultz: Thank you Laura and good afternoon everyone. My name is Gwen Schultz and I work with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources designated by the governor to represent the state on the RPB. And I do currently serve as the state co-lead.

Before I get started I want to take a moment to introduce the other representatives that are on the phone with us today. We've got Joe Atangan, Joint Chief of Staff, Jon Hall from the Department of Agriculture, Michael Jones with the U.S. Navy, Bob Labelle with the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, and Leann Bullin also with the Bureau. We then got Doug Pabst with the Environmental Protection Agency, Sarah Cooksey with the state of Delaware, Karen Chytalo New York state, Laura McKay from state of Virginia, Michael Snyder also from the state of New York, Andrew Zemba from Pennsylvania and Tony McDonald who is with the Urban Coast Institute.

So kicking it off, this slide is the – just to give you an overview of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body. This group was established in 2013, presumed to the National Ocean Policy that signed by president Obama in 2010. And then since 2013 we've been working to develop and apply a planning process to the ocean and coastal waters also states of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia in order to help guide resource conservation and economic development.

The members of the RPB including federal, state, tribal and Mid-Atlantic fishery management council representative are engaged in this collaborative process in order to really address the region's current challenges and emerging opportunities. We're working with stakeholders to do key – to increase data and information sharing, to improve of our understanding of how the Mid-Atlantic ocean and resources are being used, managed and conserved. And to approve decision making, we got a growing number of ocean uses, designed for ocean resources in states.

So it's really important to note that the RPB is not a regulatory body and has no independent legal authority. We cannot change existing authorities or create new mandates of the federal, state, tribal, fishery management council level. We are really aiming to improve the effectiveness of federal state tribal implementation responsibilities.

So on the next slide it list some of the activities that we've completed. To date the RPB has held two in-person meetings, the first and September 2013 in Long Branch, New Jersey and the second was in May 2014 in Baltimore, Maryland. And then it was during the May meeting in Baltimore with the RPB approved, our Mid-Atlantic regional ocean planning framework which articulates our vision principles, goals, objectives, includes some sample actions and also identifies our geographic focus.

This framework serves a guide for our regional ocean planning process and sets the stage for the development of a work plan in various products that will be developed in 2015 and 2016. The framework is going to be frequently referenced in the documents that we're going to be discussing today.

Since our last in-person RPB meeting in May we formed a number of internal workgroups to discuss a number of topics. The topics includes first what to be options for the content and structure of an ocean action plan, the second is strategy for improving inter jurisdictional coordination among our RPB members institutions. The third is plan to engage stakeholders including strategies for coordinating with entities that are working on issues related to bays, estuaries and coast. Fourth is the regional ocean assessment and finally continue development all of in connections to MARCO's Mid-Atlantic ocean data portal in order to provide up-to-date data to inform regional ocean planning.

And then finally in September 2014 the RPB approved its charter which described our purpose, mission membership and procedures. And this final chart is posted on the RPB website and once we've collected all of the member signatures we'll be reposting it with those signatures.

So now if we move to the next slide, just providing a quick overview of our timeline. Timeline you see represent the most up-to-date schedules to the development of our regional ocean action plan and related activities. At our next Mid-Atlantic RPB meeting it will be an in-person in January, in New York city. We hope to decide the type of ocean action plan that we will develop and that includes what type of contents and structure.

And then once the decisions of the ocean action plan has been made, the RPB will develop the work plan to guide the development of the ocean action plan throughout 2015 and 2016. The RPB is targeting late 2016 to submit its first iteration of the plan for review by the National Ocean Council. And then in 2017 we'll work on implementation in what we find in the ocean action plan on the periodic basis.

So now I like to turn to Bob Labelle from the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management who is our federal co-lead of the RPB.

Robert Labelle: Good afternoon everyone I represent the Department of the Interior on the RPB and I also serve as the federal co-lead. And I'm happy to be able to chat

with you a bit today about options for the Mid-Atlantic regional ocean action plan.

Someone at the RPB, formed an internal workgroup to consider options for the type of regional ocean action plan that we could develop for the Mid-Atlantic. And I'm a member of that workgroup and we met via teleconference every week during the summer and fall to brainstorm about possible options.

The National Ocean Council working with us and we the RPB is working to produce some ocean plan in 2016. So we're mindful about what we can realistically achieve considering our resource and time constraints. And the RPB is now considering several different options across the spectrum of possibilities and we need your input to help us move forward. Next slide please.

The national ocean policy with the development of regional ocean plans, general guidance for regional ocean plan was laid out on the executive order, stewardship of the ocean, our coast and great lakes. And then refined in the implementation plan and marine planning handbook. This past year the RPB developed a Mid-Atlantic regional ocean planning framework that Gwynne just described.

And that framework is guiding the development of our ocean plan and then a follow-on work plan on what we should accomplish. Stakeholder input is very important in guiding the RPB and determining the specific content and structure of an ocean plan for this region. And we have another workgroup developing a stakeholder engagement plan, you'll hear about that plan from Doug Pabst after I finish.

It is important to remember that RPB are not regulatory bodies and RPB have no independent authority. So all activities will continue to be regulated under the existing authorities of the federal, state, tribal or local government entities. The RPB member entities have agreed to participate on the planning process, work collaboratively to develop a regional ocean plan, build on and complement existing programs, partnerships, and initiatives, and commit to

following the plan to the extent that it's consistent with existing authorities.
Next slide please.

The RPB is considering options for the type of ocean action plans that would be practical for the region, enhance current management of the staffed ocean area and satisfy the degree of interest of Mid-Atlantic ocean stakeholders. Our workgroup has laid out five options to different plan types what we called options A, B, C, D and E for RPB consideration. All of which with informed decision making under existing authorities, be designed and implemented with robust stakeholder input, build on existing partnership and planning efforts in the region, and be updated overtime to reflect new information and changing condition.

As you can see from the illustration on this slide, the five options considered all across the spectrum of plan types that range from a process oriented approach to one that is geographically oriented. I want to emphasize that each one of these options would be informed by input from stakeholders and we look forward to your comments today and at the upcoming public meetings.

On the follow-up to the spectrum is a process oriented approach to regional ocean planning, we are calling option A and issue triggered coordination process. This approach results in agreement on a process regarding how to engage in the jurisdiction of coordination to address specific issues that arrive on a case by case basis. An example of this approach would be agreements that could be incorporated into national environmental policy, act, and state environmental policy act reviews for various projects or actions.

The next option is option B, this type of plan would support the development of a compatibility assessment and agreements to use the resulting products from that assessment to inform decision making under existing authority.

The middle option on the spectrum, option C, is titled targeted coordination by issue or geography. This type of plan describes specific into jurisdictional coordination commitments that could focus on specific issues, programs, projects and or geographies which have yet to be determined. An example could be to focus on areas with significant use conflicts or important

ecological value into jurisdictional coordination agreements articulated in the plan, would improve governmental business practices and inform management actions under existing authorities.

The next option on the spectrum is option D, title compatible use areas. This type of plan with inputs from stakeholders results in mapping of a discrete geographic areas to be determine with the specific resources, services and habitat clearly delineated and documented. Decision bade under existing authorities would then be informed by the maps and by compatibility analysis.

Finally the last option laid out on the far right of the spectrum is option E, comprehensive optimal use maps. This type of plan would extend to the entire Mid-Atlantic region and result in a single comprehensive map with all natural resources and current human uses mapped. Areas of more compatibility and less compatibility identified and optimal uses recommended for each type of area. Next slide please.

As our in depth discussions of the five options we created this graph to the pick our estimate of our relative practicality of the different options we considered. We thought a visual tool might be helpful here in terms of weighing the practicality of the various options. So if you look at the Y axis that is increasing difficulty reaching consensus and then developing and then implementing the plan.

On the X axis it's increasing cost, resources, time, dollars, staff time et cetera needed to develop and implement this specific type of plan. Now the location of these are certainly relative and just estimates but you can see that options B, C and D fall lower in the graph on both axis and therefore more practical in the estimation of the RPB. Next slide please.

After capital deliberation the RPB finds option A and E to be impractical at this point. Option A may not result in sufficient improvement over the status quo because option A would require addressing issues on a case by case basis. The total level of effort needed is multiplied by the different individual project, programs, a memorandum agreements that could be undertaken.

Likewise option E is also considered impractical and maybe very time consuming and costly and create a region management system that cannot rarely incorporate changes of scientific information and technologies improved. And as new users are propose to the ocean. It could also be very difficult to reach consensus on such a comprehensive plan.

Therefore the RPB considers options B, C, D to be more feasible and we are interested in further considering and refining these options. We welcome input on all options in this document, we recognize there maybe opportunities to refine various elements of each option including potential hybrid approaches. Next slide please.

More detailed information on option B, C And D is presented in the document titled regional ocean action plan options draft example outline, quite a title. We urge you to read this and give us your thoughts on it, we developed that outline to show how the structure of a plan might appear on the different options. And as you can see on this slide and in the document there are differences in the various options and there are some commonalities for all three of these options.

For example they can draw from an integrate with existing and ongoing data gathering and planning, efforts they would inform decision making under existing authorities, a complete draft of the ocean action plan could be available for review by the end of 2016. And a written plan could be updated as new information becomes available. Next slide please.

Today we also have a draft for you to review that includes an outline of how the content and structure of the regions first ocean plan could appear considering different options. We welcome your input on your nature of the options that we described and the suggested structure of the ocean action plan itself. Presently it's structured like the table of contents.

We certainly are looking forward, we encourage you to read through the ocean action plan option and give us your feedback. At the end of the document following the draft example outlined is appendix A which contained additional information about the options for an ocean action plan. And the

matrix was designed to describe that structure and content of the three different draft options, so there's a lot more information in that document that you can find out if you're interested in learning of this options. So next slide please.

What's your input in the nature and the structure of the ocean action plan options and how we can improve the draft options outlined. Please share any comments concerns or suggestion and please let us know what option or options you prefer. Your input will help inform the regional ocean action plan that would developed over the next few years.

And at this point thank you very much and I'll turn to Doug Pabst to talk about the stakeholder engagement.

Douglas Pabst: Thanks Bob, this is Doug Pabst from the Environmental Protection Agency, I'm on the Regional Planning Body also representing region three on this effort. And I'll talk a little bit about our stakeholder engagement plan that we have and hopefully everybody had a chance to go to the BOEM.gov website and see our interim stakeholder engagement planning. Keep in mind this is just a start, you know, get the conversation started and I'm going to briefly walkthrough the guts of it and hopefully stimulate some conversation. But hopefully people can reach out to me or the members of the workgroup to get their thoughts. Next slide please.

This is a pretty wordy slide I'm not going to go through the whole thing, you know, it has plan, it has goal, objectives. We discussed option for participation, we really want people to be part of a process and not just expect to buy in a half a couple of comment periods every now and then that's just not what we're going for. Keep in mind we will have this out for comments until November 20th and hopefully everybody will get a chance to share their thoughts with us. Next slide.

And just, you know, there's no linear process, the stakeholder engagement I think and by no means think that there's any one, two, three, or four ways to do it. But we're looking to work closely with everybody, directly coordinate, be meaningful, efficient. I think that's probably the most important word on

this slide is to be efficient and to try to get to people in ways that don't annoy them with a 100,000 emails but also make sure they have an opportunity to be aware of all the really good things that are going on and opportunities to be involved. Next slide.

And we have a lot of, I mean, really good experts and people that are working already in the Mid-Atlantic and focusing on a lot of the goals and objectives that we have particularly healthy ocean and sustainable uses of those oceans. And we want to build off of those processes but we have to be recognize that resource constraints across the federal and state level are going to limit us a little bit and we want to again focus on efficiencies. Next slide.

Sorry, I want to mention that we also are working with MARCO and the Mid-Atlantic regional council on the ocean that they have a stakeholder liaison group so we are really fortunate to have a lot of work that's being done at the local level and we certainly are going to be building on that as we move forward.

We have upcoming opportunities for people in addition to just submitting comments between now and November 28th, we're going to have some public listening sessions. November 5th in Lewes, Delaware; November 6th in Virginia Beach; November 10th in Ocean City, Maryland; November 17th in Stony Brook, Long Island; November 18th in Long Branch, New Jersey. But there's no reason to just wait to go to a listening session I think in this age of technological wonder you can simply email us go to the BOEM website, send us comments to the addresses that are on the screen. Most of you know who your ocean person is in the area that's working at the state, federal and local level and you should be seeking those people out to let them know your thoughts and look for opportunities to be involved. Next slide.

And just a thought process of things we're trying to get your feedback on and, you know, what's important to you, how can we basically get you engaged in the process, what are the best types of opportunities? And really we're really looking for thoughts a lot of the people that are on this call are experts at this and have been doing this for a long time and we really want to take advantage

of that expertise. And let us know what you think is the best way that we can reach the most people in the most efficient way that we can make that happen.

And I think that I will turn to Sarah Cooksey who's going to talk a little bit about the region ocean assessment. Thank you.

Sarah Cooksey: Thank you Doug. Special shout out to all the people that have joined us on the phone, I appreciate how you taking the time today to learn a little bit more about this. And we're running late so I'm going at a fast clip through my slides.

I'm going to talk today about the regional ocean assessment. Next slide please.

And some of you might be wondering what that is and in short it is the compilation of the best available physical, biological and social economic information about our region. And the purpose of it is to help inform whatever action plan option we decide on that Bob has already gone through. So it will characterize the current ecological and human use of our area and this type of assessment is typically used to understand the condition and use of that area to help guide our planning.

The national ocean policy documents which are available on the webpage have a much longer definition of that, if you're interested, you can take a look at that. So it's being developed to ensure that our ocean action plan is informed with the best scientifically available information that exist or is in development. We will build on the frame goals that we develop this past spring and it will provide up-to-date information about the current baseline conditions, resources, and uses in the Mid-Atlantic. And we will try to identify future trends and information gaps.

As you know given the changing nature of the marine environment and human activities, our thinking is that the ROA would be an online tool, so that's important for you to takeaway. It will be an online tool with links to other sources of information rather than a static potentially massive because there's a lot of information about our region of existing information so we like your feedback on that. Next slide please. Next slide please.

Currently we are in the phase one development and this is the beginning of the process in the listening sessions to get feedback from stakeholders on the structure, the topics and the proposed content. Next slide please.

So we have about 10 proposed topics and I'm going to start reading them even though, there we go, we have a little delay. Of course biology and ecology the ocean environment interactions between A and C. As you know we have a very important national security interest in the region. Energy development, fishing, ocean aqua culture, marine commerce and navigation, (SAN) management, non consumptive recreation, tribal uses and under C infrastructure. So these are the topics that we focused on and we would like your feedback on if we have missed anything in our preliminary development of the ROA. The outline that we developed is based on the goals and objectives that were in the ocean planning framework. Next slide please.

Each topic each of those ten or so topics that I just went over in this online tool will follow the following template. Of course it will have an introduction, it will talk about key issues, reviews some of the socioeconomic and culturally important considerations. We hope to do a current status and trends indicator, we will do a gap analysis to the best of our ability and talk about ongoing studies how we're considering how the ROA intersect with other ROA topics. We do have a big special component and we're going to be using the MARCO portal which Tony McDonald will talk about in just a minute.

And the portal, the MARCO portal has been very important in the development of the ROA. Of course we'll have references because as an online tool we know that some readers will want to dig a little bit deeper and we're going to provide areas where you can go and do that. So far the ROA workgroup and we too have had a team that has worked very hard over the summer and fall and that one is in-person to make sure we are all in agreement on a path forward.

We've been working together with the portal team to develop how to best use the portal to facilitate distribution of the map. For those of you who are not

familiar with the portal it's an online special resource center where you can visualize ocean uses and resources in our region. Many of the data layers that are on the portal have already helped populate our online tool. And I think in closing, yes, almost in closing, in addition to the close coordination with the data portal we also aim to maximize compatibility for integration with other federal state, tribal and interagency tools. So specifically what would we like your feedback on. Do you think the outline – those topics that I went over are – have we missed anything for ocean planning.

What do you think about the format, the online tool? If you don't like it, please recommend something different. Are there other types of information that we should include on each topic and would you prefer to go to the data portal, a web platform or printed document. And then of course any other information you have to keep this up to date. So with that I will turn it over to Tony McDonald to share some updates about the Mid-Atlantic ocean data portal.

Tony McDonald: Great thank, you very much Sarah. And again the ocean data portal as Sarah described really is the place that we hope that you could actually go to visualize some of the information that Sarah and the other speakers talked about. As well as to have some tools to help support some of the planning efforts that will be undertaken by the RPB moving forward.

So we really want to talk about the portal as we stakeholder informed, we've been working at this for a while. Actually if you backup just one second please we've been working out at the portal really based on stakeholders, we've been meeting with stakeholder groups to actually do a variety of things. We want to make sure to the extent possible we can actually fill that gaps and for example recreational use has been identified by most of the groups we meet really a source of information that we need. So we had a series of meetings and also done some survey to try to get better recreational use data that we can map and put on with the many other data layers that are on the ocean data portal. Next slide please. Next slide please.

Hello.

Thank you. Thank you.

Again we are really building on a lot of the data that is available through federal sources and through other partners with (Maria Cadas) and others so we are building on that but we are tailoring it to really focus on regional priorities. So this is just one example we have been meeting with Martine sector, the tug and tow traffic sector, the carter traffic, just to reflect the relationship between in this case offshore wind areas and some of the activities that are ongoing. Again we are doing this with the industry, we are doing this from input from the coastguard and other partners and we're trying to actually tailor information that is otherwise available to specific needs in this region and to support some of the ocean planning activities that the RPB described earlier. Next slide please.

So we really are also as I said we're trying to address regional needs but were also trying to reflect our communities in the most particular way that reflects their interest. So this is just a general example, this is actually something that in process but the portal team has been working with the commercial fishing industry in a way to sort of reflect better what we call communities at sea or really what the nature of fishing activities is by community and by fishing types so that we really can get a better reflection of the activity that really the commercial fisherman and others can see themselves in the data at a finer scale that what is currently available on some of the federal data sets. So again this is still under process, we will not finalize this until we circle back with the industry and get some support from them.

Finally we'll talk a little bit, again there's a lot there, that we're trying to align this with some regional ocean assessment, so we're trying to align our data not only in grouping that reflect regional planning priorities and areas. But we're also trying to align data sets so that we can actually reflect the ocean assessment issues and information that is available for the public to see and really be able to react to. Next slide please.

So we again are also trying to provide the capacity on this portal to do planning so we really are urging folks to get on the portal to look at it, to signup for using it, you can create and save bookmarks, so you can actually

look at only those areas that you care about most. You can have drawing features to actually create special focus areas or map shapes that you or your groups maybe interested in. You can share maps with other folks, join groups to discuss things offline so that you can actually have an online planning tool. And also contribute your information stories we want this to reflect the regional activities, the regional uses in the Mid-Atlantic and encourage people to sign up and look for opportunities not only to support the regional planning process but also to provide more input into the portal as we move forward.

Thank you very much.

Laura Cantral: All right. Thank you Tony, this is Laura Cantral and thanks to all of the speakers for providing a great overview of what the RPB has been doing over the course of the summer and the fall, and the draft documents that are available. And that as you heard from each of the speakers, the RPB is very keen to get your input and your feedback and your reaction to what they've been working on and what they have presented.

And that I think it's important to note for some context as Gwynne said at the outset in outlining the timeline for the RPB. This webinar, the RPB wanted to have this opportunity to meet with you in a webinar format to give you an initial introduction to these materials and of course it's quick, we just have an hour to be together today. But then encourage you to be part of the public listening sessions to engage in some real-time dialog with members of the RPB, provide you written comment by November 20th.

And it's important that you get your input in over the course of November because that feedback will be considered and factored in to address materials that the RPB will be discussing at the January meeting in New York. And as Gwynne said there will be a number of decisions that will be made during that meeting including which of these options the RPB wants to pursue for the development of an ocean action plan. And the decision about that will dictate the way the work will flow in the number of other important aspects of the planning process including stakeholder engagement, the regional ocean assessment, and other things that you heard our presenters talked about.

So we got a few minutes to take some of the questions and we have a few questions coming in. Another point that I want to make, this is a process or mechanics point, many of you participated in the first webinar that the RPB had, it was a four hour long introductory webinar and we had phone lines available for people to take advantage of and yet absolutely no takers, no one availed themselves of that option. And so for this format we have provided the chat option and encourage you to use that, let us know what's on your mind, and we'll go for as long as we can before we have to wrap it up too.

So the first one that I am going to post is a question for Bob regarding the ocean action plan. This question is speaking further clarification on the – the graph of relative practicality of options graph. And the question is, when is option C and D also involved a lot of consensus building and political issues if both the options involve choosing particular areas in the ocean to focus on? And we are – here we are – yes, so we put that graph so that you can have that for reference.

Robert Labelle: Yes. Hi, this is Bob, this is a very solid observation. All of these options are going to involve those types of issues. What we're trying to show in this graph is over and above what all of these five options already is subject to that actually implement. You know, if you then compare the residual difficulty we feel this is where they've shake out.

So, you know, just because C for example happens to be the lowest, we don't have any numbers on the axis because we realize that each of these come take a lot of effort. And, you know, the inter jurisdictional coordination efforts are going to be needed to do any of these. So that's basically my response to that question.

Laura Cantral: OK, thank you Bob. We're just going to continue on this topic because we got a couple of other questions and also other members of your workgroup or other members of the RPB on the line if you want to weigh in and add anything to what Bob is offering as answers you're welcome to do so. Bob here is our next question.

Given the RPB is accepting comments on options A through E and recognizing that we can propose a hybrid, can you describe in greater detail what was involved in option A and E and what specifically made them impractical?

So just kind of one more follow-up question that, what particular aspect of the data and analysis, implementation plan, the plan update, the inter jurisdictional coordination process, of those components, what made those options impractical than the workgroups view?

Robert Labelle: Sure and I would encourage everyone to read the paper that we have made since there's some detail including the appendix A.. With regards to the option A, I think we determined that because of sort of an ad hoc basis it wouldn't setup mechanism like this other plans that could be used for future project or actions. You know, this would be a case by case things were certain agencies would get together, try to work a little more collaboratively in terms of what the federal action was or the state action was.

And, you know, when you look at that in terms of just doing it for one project that came along, you have to repeat that for all the other things that might be coming along. It's not that much different that what's happening now to more or less degrees as individual ideas come along in terms of multiple use in the ocean. And so we move it up on the Y axis to sort of express that case by case situation.

Option E is – it would be very difficult if you're trying to label one use being optimal over another use, it would be difficult for all the groups involved to reach consensus on even the uses, never mind one over another. And in terms of, you know, the practical world of developing, if consensus was reached, then it would also take a lot of work effort and a lot of resources to get those areas mapped. And in the state where all the agencies involved, state, federal, tribal and other ocean uses would sort of agree that those are the optimal uses.

So I think what the RPB decided to do was to concentrate on options more in the middle of that spectrum that we had that runs from, you know, process

oriented over to geographically oriented and try to work on these three options in the middle or some combination of both.

Laura Cantral: Thank you Bob. So one – you’re not off the hook yet, one more for you Bob. And potentially Joe Atangan and to members of the RPB who are also on the northeast RPB, this is a compare and contrast question. The northeast RPB is currently considering a set of very specific options for identifying ecologically important areas and for efficient decision making. Most of these options seen both cross cutting across your plan option B through D and potentially broader reaching than any individual options. Can you compare and contrast what you’re proposing and what the northeast is proposing?

Robert Labelle: Sure, I’ll start and then Joe you’re welcome to join in. In the Northeast we have – it’s more than an option, it’s a discussion labeled effective decision making. And that sort of the same type of approach that we’re taking in the Mid-Atlantic under the so called inter jurisdictional coordination efforts.

And what that is, is the agencies are working together ahead of time to sort of streamline how they interact now on given issues to provide earlier input to the public and also ocean community, ocean stakeholders on projects that maybe coming down the road to make agreements ahead of time on, you know, maybe working together on environmental documents. And, you know, it’s also work using some of these compatibility tools to inform the decisions.

So it’s very similar, I think in the northeast early on they were focusing on several type of activities I believe it was wind, agriculture, and offshore sand. But they are also taking a lot of approach there to look at other types of issues that come along. I think in the Mid-Atlantic where by focusing on these middle options the same tools and approaches and processes and ideas that are being discussed in the northeast are right on the table here. So I just think as the New York RPB meets in January, if we do a homework right they’ll have a good decision to make in terms of which options or mix of options they want to pursue. And Joe I’d be happy to hear your thoughts from this as well.

Joe Atangan: Thanks Bob. I think the other difference that we need to highlight a little bit here is this – is we're tackling actually from two difference angles also. The northeast focus on the issues, what we're looking at here on the ocean options thesis, what's the final plan going to look like. And I don't know that, I guess we're in the different stages of the defining what the plan is going to look like.

I think the east has a little bit of advantage on us at this point and that they have the Massachusetts plan, they can refer to, they got the Rhode Island (SAN) that they can refer to and use as model for what their plan is going to shape up to be. We don't have that advantage in the Mid-Atlantic so we're looking at these options as – and soliciting the public feedback on hey is this – is this stands for the mail as far as ocean plan for the Mid-Atlantic region.

Robert Labelle: I will just add one more thing, this is Bob again. The northeast recently held a series of public meeting to input on their activity. And at a stakeholder engagement meeting there's a lot of good ideas in terms of how to integrate the regional ocean assessment type products into the regional ocean action plan effort. You know, a lot of folks encouraging ecological approach certainly a lot of experts giving their thoughts and opinion on how you can interface multiple use areas, without just simplistically overlying them on a map. And, you know, what you should worry about in terms of trying to do that in a meaningful way.

So very, very good input coming from the stakeholders and public and we're hopeful that over the next month we'll get the same thing and I'm sure we will from the Mid-Atlantic reviewers.

Laura Cantral: Great. Thank you. So we have one more question about the ocean action plan options. And then we also have a question about the regional ocean assessment and about the portal. And so let's try to get through all of those and see where we are. So a question Bob, just to clarify given your remarks about the range of options, do options A and E remain under consideration?

Robert Labelle: What we try to do is the workgroup put all five options in front of the RPB and the RPB decided to send all five options out for public inspection and comments. And so yes, but we also wanted folks to realize that we're

focusing more on the middle options but we're certainly open to other ideas and even beyond these five options we like, you know, any input we can get that would help us move forward here.

Laura Cantral: OK, and maybe a follow-up to that is perhaps consider in option E if the last bit of that text will remove the package that we in optimal use is recommended for each type area that are that would change RPBs mind about the feasibility of that option? So something that I suspect there would be lots more discussion about in the public session. So I'm going to – yes.

Karen Chytalo: Laura I'm sorry, this is Karen Chytalo.

Laura Cantral: Hi Karen.

Karen Chytalo: The co-chair of this group too, I just wanted to mention that we are looking – we can look at hybrid or some best features so if people see some features they really think very significant, that they really think it's important in the plan, they should point that out and that would be very helpful in deciding what the best option will be.

Laura Cantral: Great. Thank you Karen, absolutely a good point. So this next question is for you Sarah. Can you clarify on how the information included in the regional ocean assessment will be used, for example how will the regional ocean assessment data be used to ensure your meeting the goal of healthy ocean ecosystem?

Sarah Cooksey: That's a good question. It's important for our listeners to know that the purpose of the ROA is to inform the Regional Planning Body. So I would expect that at some time we're going to have to develop some metrics now that's not part of the ROA per se but in order to know whether we have made progress from reaching our two broad goals which one of them is, you know, paraphrasing healthy oceans and clean water, we're going to have to have some way to measure that. And that would probably using an existing government programs and our partners (MARCO's) and such who do monitoring but that's the short answer to that question.

Laura Cantral: OK, so thank you Sarah. We have a question – we have a question for you and then we got a couple of process questions that we’ll entertain and then we’re about to run out of time. But I think we can manage the remaining questions that we’ve got. Any last call for question if you want to chat, that would be the time. Tony, how was the new RPB data portal make use of and interact with the (MARCO’s) data portal?

Tony McDonald: They’re actually – we have had discussions, we partner with some of the folks from (MARCO’s) so that (MARCO’s) data portal reflects the real-time data that’s being collected and some other information of products. So we actually have been talking with them about cross referencing between the two portals to make it clear of how the data relates to each other. So we are coordinating with them just in terms of making sure that the public understands the different uses for the portals.

And we have also began discussions with them about how we use and try to incorporate some of the real-time data into time series or data series that can be used for planning purposes. So that is a discussion and we are developing hopefully and ongoing partnership with the Mid-Atlantic regional ocean observing systems to bridge the real-time data and some of the data that’s on the portal that is not necessarily real-time.

Laura Cantral: Thank you. So one question or perhaps a request or suggestion has come in regarding I think it’s reacting to your comment Bob about the stakeholder meetings in the northeast and it’s a question about whether the RPB would considered a similar stakeholder workshop for working through the ocean action plan option. And I think that’s something the RPB would be happy to take under consideration and, you know, depending on taming and capacity and I think that there would be appetite for that but certainly could not make any promises without some thought and complication so I appreciate the suggestion. Another...

Tony McDonald: I agree with that.

Laura Cantral: Yes, go ahead.

Tony McDonald: I just said I agree with that. Thank you.

Laura Cantral: OK, great. Another question has been posted about the deadlines, the November 28th deadline, why our comments due by November 28th which is a four week turnaround when the RPB isn't meeting until January 28th?

What the RPB is planning to do in response to the comment in other words revising options between November 28th and January 28th. The answer to that question is the reason for the deadline is just that enable the RPB to collect the input that you all and others in this region we hope will be providing over the course of the month of November. And to have time to deliberate and make some changes based on that input and produce a next iteration of documents that will be up for consideration and discussion at the January meeting.

And as we all know this is a holiday time of year where you got to factor in a little extra time to account for the fact that people won't be available for some of those weeks and so we needed to build that in. So that answers your question.

OK, anything else. All right, I think it's about time for us to wrap up. And just a quick summary we heard some process questions, several questions about the options for an ocean action plan. The graphics indicating the practicality of those options and the RPBs initial perspective of these and the willingness to consider new hybrids which I think you heard that they are very willing to hear your ideas, your reactions including hybrid options and things you like along that spectrum. We heard some questions about the regional ocean assessment and the portal and some good suggestions about stakeholder engagement.

So thank you for that input and keep it coming. Just to remind you, we will be making these proceedings available to you, there will be a recording of this webinar, a transcript, a record of the chat questions and comments, and a list of all those who have been participating today.

Here is a list of the public listening sessions that are coming up, you can see it there and you can go to the website to learn more. These are being sponsored and hosted by MARCO from starting November 5th through the 18th. We encourage all of you to attend and please spread the word to your

colleagues, this RPB is taking feedback from as many stakeholders as possible to informal speaking and development of the addressed product. And continue to visit the website update and details about these listening sessions, the documents, the webinar when there's available, that's where you can find it all.

So I think we are at the hour and it's time to wrap-up, thank you very much. Thank you RPB members fro joining us, thank you speakers, thank you participants and we will see you soon.

Operator: And thank you to everyone for joining us today. We hope you found this webcast presentation informative. And this does includes the program. You may all now disconnect. Everyone have a good day.

Male: Thank you.

Female: Thank you.

Female: Thank you.

END