

BOEM Pacific Region: Ongoing Study

Field	Study Information
Title	Socioeconomic Characterization of West Coast Fisheries in Relation to Offshore Wind Development (PR-22-SOC)
Administered by	Pacific OCS Regional Office
BOEM Contact(s)	Lisa Gilbane (lisa.gilbane@boem.gov), Ingrid Biedron (ingrid.biedron@boem.gov)
Procurement Type(s)	Interagency Agreement
Conducting Organization(s)	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Northwest Fisheries Science Center and Southwest Fisheries Science Center
Total BOEM Cost	\$399,985
Performance Period	FY 2022–2024
Final Report Due	August 31, 2024
Date Revised	November 30, 2023
Problem	There is a gap in understanding about socioeconomic characteristics of West Coast fisheries in relation to offshore wind (OSW) development, and additional information is needed to enable BOEM to conduct a more thorough analysis of potential impacts from OSW activities (including siting characterization, leasing, construction and operations, and decommissioning) on fishing sectors and communities.
Intervention	Leverage federal partnerships to harness NMFS unique expertise in fisheries socioeconomics to meet BOEM Pacific Region’s requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for OSW leasing; while developing regional capacity to determine socioeconomic impacts related to OSW.
Comparison	Absent this partnership, BOEM Pacific Region will not be able to meet its socioeconomic NEPA requirements for OSW development.
Outcome	Report on methodology for developing socioeconomic impacts to fisheries and supporting sectors for OSW.
Context	California, Oregon, Washington

BOEM Information Need(s): BOEM Pacific Region seeks to characterize West Coast fishing communities, including supportive industries (primary, secondary, and ancillary markets), fishing-related infrastructure, fishing sector interconnections, and potential connection between fishing sectors and OSW development. BOEM Pacific Region will use this information to further its understanding of West Coast fisheries and to support NEPA analysis and decision-making related to the planning of OSW development.

Background: BOEM Pacific Region is charged with planning, siting, and authorizing OSW development on the outer continental shelf (OCS) offshore the states of California, Oregon, Washington, and Hawaii. BOEM's process of planning, siting, and authorizing OSW development involves various types of analyses

to inform decision-making and comply with applicable laws, including NEPA. Throughout this process BOEM is engaging with other federal agencies (including NMFS), states, tribes, local governments, and stakeholders, including the OSW industry and the fishing industry. Commercial and recreational fisheries and fishing communities may be impacted by the site characterization, construction, operation, and decommissioning of OSW facilities. BOEM has reached out to fishing communities in California, Oregon, and Washington to gather their feedback and comments, and will be doing so as part of an ongoing public engagement objective. Fishing communities have expressed concerns about how impacts to fisheries will be considered and addressed by BOEM. As a result of over seven years of outreach to primarily the commercial fishing sector offshore California, BOEM understands that potential impacts to current fishing patterns from OSW operations are likely complicated. However, relevant regional information needed to identify and potentially mitigate potential impacts is limited and is not sufficient to address potential socioeconomic impacts to fisheries. Potential impacts will vary by location and by sector (i.e., fishery or gear type). Potential impacts could be direct (such as space-use conflicts) or indirect (such as changes to their port). Potential impacts could reach beyond the people landing catches at a location and could affect the regional processors, port, or general community.

Objective(s):

- Foster relationships among subject matter experts (SMEs) across BOEM, NMFS West Coast Region, and NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center which will support mutual goals of resource efficiency and utilizing best available science.
- Conduct technical information-sharing workshops with SMEs from NMFS and BOEM to discuss needs and share information about fisheries socioeconomic impact analysis and considerations.
- Prepare a foundational report that will inform BOEM Pacific Region about the use and expansion of current NMFS' Input/Output Economic Impact models, community social vulnerability indicators, diversification and concentration of fishery revenue, and the NMFS Integrated Ecosystem Assessment group's fisheries participation network analyses.
- Develop a scoping paper for the development of a socioeconomic reporting tool that could be used to prepare socioeconomic impact analyses.

Methods: Workshops will be designed by NMFS in coordination with BOEM SMEs, and summary reports will be developed by NMFS. Using information exchange among SMEs, NMFS will prepare a socioeconomic report describing West Coast fisheries. In addition, NMFS will develop a scoping paper exploring the potential development of a socioeconomic reporting tool.

Specific Research Question(s): Research questions will be posed to SMEs to determine knowledge and data gaps that currently exist.

Current Status: The interagency agreement between BOEM and NMFS was awarded on July 26, 2022. The post-award meeting was held on September 6, 2022. Discussions are underway between BOEM and NMFS regarding the timeline and process for how BOEM and NMFS will share this report with a reviewing Committee (e.g., Pacific Fishery Management Council subcommittee), receive Committee comments, and publish the final report. In October 2023, the period of performance was extended to end in August 2024.

Publications Completed: None

Affiliated WWW Sites: None

References: None