



MEETING SUMMARY

BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT MORRO BAY DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

APRIL 14, 2022
5 – 8 P.M. PT
VIRTUAL MEETING

I. Introduction

As part of the public comment process, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) hosted two virtual public meetings to present the Draft Morro Bay Environmental Assessment (Draft EA or “Draft”) and gather public input on the content of the Draft. This summary covers the first of the two meetings (the second took place on April 19, 2022).

The meeting was held remotely via webinar using the Zoom platform. Fifty-seven participants attended. Government participants included representatives from federal and state agencies, Tribes, and local governments. Participating members of the public included representatives from industry, academic and research institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), and the media. The meeting began at 5 p.m. and ended at 6:47 p.m.

The meeting recording and presentations are available at: www.boem.gov/MorroBayEA.

Meeting objectives:

- Provide information on the Morro Bay Wind Energy Area environmental review process.
- Inform comments on the Morro Bay Draft Environmental Assessment (EA).
- Provide an opportunity for the public to give input on issues or concerns with the content of the Morro Bay Draft EA.
- Answer questions related to the Draft EA.

This document summarizes key outcomes and the next steps from the meeting. It focuses on public comment input received, rather than the formal presentations made. It is not intended to be a detailed transcript. Kearns & West (K&W) facilitated the meeting.

This meeting summary is organized into the following sections:

- I. Introduction
- II. Draft EA Meeting Highlights
 - A. Welcome and Opening Remarks

- B. BOEM Wind Energy Authorization Process Approach to Offshore Wind Energy Planning in California
 - C. Overview of NEPA and the Draft EA
 - D. Clarifying Questions and Oral Responses
 - E. Public Input Opportunity and Discussion
 - F. Closing Remarks
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- A. Agenda
 - B. Registered Attendees List
 - C. Public Clarifying Questions and Oral Responses
 - D. Comments and Questions from the Public Input Opportunity
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II. Draft EA Meeting Highlights

A. Welcome and Opening Remarks

1. *Morgan Lommele, Facilitator, Kearns & West*

The meeting opened with a welcome to participants followed by a summary of draft EA meeting objectives and guidance on navigating the Zoom Webinar. The facilitator presented two polls for the participants: the first identified participant affiliations, and the second determined the number of participants planning to provide oral comments at the meeting. Appendix E contains polling results.

2. *Richard (Rick) Yarde, Environmental Analysis Section Chief, BOEM Pacific Office*

Richard Yarde explained BOEM's renewable energy authority and BOEM's directives to provide advance lease sales and complete review of at least sixteen construction and operation plans (COP) by 2025. Mr. Yarde explained how participants could provide public comments.

B. BOEM Wind Energy Authorization Process Approach to Offshore Wind Energy Planning in California

Jennifer Miller, Acting Renewable Energy Section Chief, BOEM's Pacific Office

Jennifer Miller presented an overview of BOEM's planning approach for offshore wind energy, BOEM's Offshore Wind Energy Authorization Process, the Central Coast offshore wind energy planning history, and the status of BOEM's authorization process in the environmental review processes. BOEM shared its offshore wind energy gateway for data collection on a publicly accessible website:

<https://caoffshorewind.databasin.org/>. Currently, the BOEM Morro Bay Wind Energy Area is between the planning and analysis phase and leasing phase.

Ms. Miller reiterated the amount of interagency coordination, regulatory processes, and stakeholder engagement and consultation that has and still must occur, noting that there will be another opportunity for a 60-day public comment period after the Proposed Sale Notice (PSN) that precedes the leasing phase. She explained that there are two areas that BOEM is considering for leasing: the Humboldt WEA and the Morro Bay WEA, both of which will have their own environmental review

processes. Following the PSN, BOEM will publish a Final Sale Notice and conduct a Lease Auction. Ms. Miller asked that further questions on the BOEM California Outer Continental Shelf leasing process be directed to her (jennifer.miller@boem.gov) and Sara Gultinan (sara.gultinan@boem.gov).

C. Overview of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Content of the Environmental Assessment (EA)

Lisa Gilbane, Environmental Analysis Section Chief, Office of Environment, BOEM Pacific

Lisa Gilbane presented an overview of NEPA, the content of the draft EA, and of concurrent consultation efforts. Ms. Gilbane explained that NEPA dictates that BOEM assess the environmental consequences of proposed actions, which for this analysis include the reasonably foreseeable site characterization and assessment activities by a lessee to gather information about the WEA. Her overview of the draft EA noted the environmental resources and socio-cultural considerations analyzed. She also explained that the impacts of COPs are not being considered in the analysis in the Draft EA but will be considered in another NEPA process once a COP is submitted.

Ms. Gilbane highlighted the multiple consultations BOEM is conducting concurrently with NEPA process, including National Historic Preservation Act Section 106, Endangered Species Act, Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, and Coastal Zone Management Act.

Ms. Gilbane emphasized that the PSN will be released for Humboldt and Morro Bay together in Spring/Summer 2022, and there will be a 60-day comment review period. Ms. Gilbane invited participants to submit comments, direct further questions to her (Lisa.Gilbane@boem.gov), and visit BOEM's website.

D. Clarifying Questions and Oral Responses

Members of the public asked clarifying questions related to the draft EA and NEPA process. BOEM provided oral responses on the following topics:

- PSN leasing and timeline.
- Potential impacts and characteristics of wind turbine construction and implementation. BOEM is not at the site characterization stage that addresses impacts of wind energy projects on the water.

Appendix E contains the questions and responses.

E. Public Input Opportunity and Discussion

Ms. Lommele invited participants to provide oral public comments. A summary of the public comments organized by key themes is provided below.

- Fishing/Fishing Communities: Commenters expressed concern around the uncertainty of potential impacts on fish habitats due to wind energy and indicated the need for thorough and unbiased studies.
- Wind Energy: Commenters look forward to wind energy in Morro Bay and the potential positive impacts.

- Other Examples: Commenters asked about how the Morro Bay process can learn from Europe and East Coast wind energy projects.

Appendix D lists all public comments.

F. Closing Remarks

Lisa Gilbane thanked participants for their time and comments. She encouraged participants to submit further comments via mail and email and to visit www.boem.gov/MorroBayEA to view meeting recordings.

Ms. Gilbane noted the next steps in the environmental review process and that the public comment period ends May 16, 2022, at 11:59 p.m. EST / 8:59 p.m. PST. Comments can be submitted through Regulations.gov under the docket number BOEM-2021-0044.

III. Appendices

A. Agenda

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management Morro Bay Draft Environmental Assessment Public Meeting

Agenda

Thursday, April 14, 2022
5 – 8 p.m. PT

Registration:

https://kearnswest.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_f-urEkfcRmChfgsdl-6KVw

Meeting Objectives

- Provide information on the Morro Bay Wind Energy Area (WEA) and Draft Environmental Assessment (EA).
- Answer questions related to the Draft EA.
- Solicit public input on the WEA and Draft EA.

Agenda Item	Presenter
Welcome and Webinar Guidance	Kearns & West Facilitator
Overview of Morro Bay Draft EA	Jennifer Miller, BOEM Lisa Gilbane, BOEM
Clarifying Questions on Draft EA	Lisa Gilbane, BOEM Kearns & West Facilitator
Public Comment	Participants Kearns & West Facilitator
Closing Remarks	Lisa Gilbane, BOEM

B. Registered Attendees List

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation	Type of Affiliation
Jack	Barkowski		Business/Industry
Claire	Behrens	AFRY Management Consulting	Business/Industry
Joshua	Boswell	REACH	Non-governmental organization
Bin	Cai		Academia
Davin	Chan	CSL	Business/Industry
Joanne	DeanFreemire		N/A
Sharon	Donohoe	Turbine Technology Partners, LLC	Business/Industry
Dan	Duke	H. T. Harvey & Associates	Business/Industry
Tina	Fahy		Government
Rachelle	Fisher	Strategic Earth Consulting	Business/Industry
Kerry	Griffin		Government
Eric	Hawkinson	Tetra Tech	Business/Industry
Christine	Heinrichs		Community-Based Organization
Katherine	Hoff	CLEE (UC Berkeley)	Academia
Dan	Holmes	Longitude 123, Inc.	Business/Industry
Nick	Johansen	Avangrid Renewables	Business/Industry
Jim	Lanard	Magellan Wind	Business/Industry
Eric	Lin		Business/Industry
Arthur	Lorton		Business/Industry
Don	Maruska		Other
Caroline	Mueller	Avangrid Renewables	Business/Industry
Jeremiah	OBrien	Morro Bay Commercial Fishermens Org.	Community-Based Organization
Robert	Perry	Synergistic Solutions	Business/Industry
Steve	Scheiblaue	Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries	Community-Based Organization
Prianka	Sharma	Office of Advocacy, US Small Business Administration	Government
Rachel	Showalter	KCBX	Press
Karie	Silva		Business/Industry
Amy	Sparks	H. T. Harvey & Associates	Business/Industry
Cheryl	Stahl	DNV	Business/Industry

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation	Type of Affiliation
Nico	Turpin-Invernon		Business/Industry
Michael	Wilks		N/A
Claudia	Worthen	EcoPlanners	Business/Industry
Andrew	Zalay	Ewind consultants	Non-governmental organization

C. Clarifying Questions and Oral Responses

Participants asked clarifying questions in the Zoom Q&A box after both presentations. Descriptions of questions and responses for both sessions are listed below. These are intended for reference and are not intended to be verbatim.

Questions

Data/Research

- Has there been an assessment of the wind resource in the Morro Bay area? For example, average annual hub height wind speed to predict energy yield.
 - The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) has a delineation report looking at wind buoys to collect data and build models. However, current data and models are insufficient to construct a wind energy project. A site assessment process will occur before construction begins, requiring data collection from the lessee.

Fishing

- What is the status and timeline of the essential fish habitat consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service?
 - There is no timeline. However, consultation has started and will conclude before construction activities begin.
- Does BOEM believe that it has had sufficient direct discussions with regional fishermen to understand the full consequences of offshore wind development on fisheries?
 - Conversations and outreach with fishing communities began in 2016. BOEM held conversations with fishermen in November. This upcoming project phase will require continued discussion.
- Will BOEM evaluate impacts experienced by commercial fishermen?
 - Fishing liaisons help surveyors communicate about upcoming surveys and consult about seasonality impacts during surveys.

Implementation

- Who will clean up malfunctioning offshore wind installations?
 - BOEM requires lessees to clean up trash and debris, whether intentional or not. Rules and regulations require leaving spaces in their original condition.

Timeline

- Why is there only 30-day comment period for the draft EA?
 - The comment period is pre-established.
- Can you clarify the timing of the release of the combined Proposed Sale Notice (PSN)?
 - The PSN will occur in the Spring/Summer timeframe.
- Will the PSN include proposed lease stipulations? How long will the comment period be?
 - BOEM's PSN for Morro Bay will occur simultaneously with Humboldt Bay. The comment period will last 60 days.
- Why is there a Fall 2022 lease action when the sale is not finalized?
 - BOEM follows Executive Orders, California mandates, and CEQA requirements to determine timelines. Like the East Coast, BOEM expects no significant impacts found, allowing the sale to move forward.

Other

- Does BOEM realize that projects are in the middle of fishing grounds?
 - Stakeholder meetings occurred in December 2021 to hear concerns regarding potential impacts on the fishing community.
- What are BOEM's local content requirements, given the UK Crown Estate leases have a 50% local content requirement and the US is buying WTG Jones Act-compliant installation vessels made in China, and most commercially available offshore WTGs are made overseas?
 - BOEM does not have a local content requirement. However, BOEM prefers to work with local communities and developers. BOEM wants to incorporate local content when possible but it is not in our jurisdiction to do so.
- Will BOEM be changing anything in the permit language to avoid litigation faced on the East Coast, particularly with the commercial fishing industry?
 - BOEM continues to follow the lessons learned from the East Coast and communicate with commercial fishing industries.

D. Comments and Questions from the Public Input Opportunity

The following comments were received during the meeting. These are summaries of the comments received and are not intended to be verbatim.

1. Site assessments via acoustic surveys may prevent fish from biting. BOEM should take steps to evaluate what is going on with fishing in the site assessment area and how they will mitigate and compensate fishermen.
2. Proposed windmill placements are in open fishing grounds impacting swordfish, albacore, and more. Who is responsible for cleanup? The process of providing comments is difficult.
3. Morro Bay relies heavily on fishing and tourism. There will be a negative impact from wind turbines within smaller communities that depend on fishing and tourism. Heavy traffic will increase because of turbine construction and transportation. These projects lack localized jobs, and instead bring in outside workers, increasing stress and impacting struggling families.
4. When will the feasibility study be available, and will the comments be addressed in the final feasibility study?

5. Concerns of the fishing community are essential. Fisheries should be supported in this process.
6. There are benefits of offshore wind. Wind energy will be an excellent conduit to employ former Morro Bay power plant employees. Offshore wind floating platforms and cables can be built in the United States.
7. BOEM should increase direct contact with fishermen and create a more thorough environmental assessment before the lease release.
8. Based on experience with the Whiskey Run wind farm in Oregon, wind farms could help fish populations. The Whiskey Run wind farm set aside areas for lizards, which has been positive.
9. There is concern over conflict of interests. Studies are funded by BOEM, including Cal Poly's studies. The VMS study area was inaccurate, and the draft EA does not explain inconsistencies in their assessments. There is a lack of communication around survey collection and timing. Commercial fishing should incorporate fish studies and guide observer work from the fishing community. BOEM needs to bring in an entity with no financial interest to avoid bias. Lessees should be required to sign commercial fishing agreements before lease assessment activities.
10. BOEM should increase communication, and there should be more in-person meetings.
11. Local skilled workers should build and train workers who will be out of a job from the decommissioning of the Diablo Canyon power plant.

E. Poll Results

Participant Affiliation

Affiliated Group	Number (out of 34)	Percent
Community-Based Organization	2	6%
Academia	2	6%
Government	2	6%
Non-Governmental Organization	2	6%
Tribal/Indigenous	1	3%
Business/Industry	12	34%
Press	2	6%
Other	7	21%

Public Comment: Are you planning to provide a public comment today?

Answer	Number (out of 34)	Percent
Yes	7	21%
No	27	79%