

Comments from Garden State Seafood Association

Please accept these comments on behalf of the Garden State Seafood Association regarding commercial leases for the construction of a wind energy projects on the Outer Continental Shelf offshore Maryland. The GSSA is comprised of commercial fishermen, shore-based seafood processors, commercial dock facilities, seafood markets and restaurants, and various NJ-based commercial fishing industry support businesses. The GSSA membership represents every major port in the State, harvesting approximately \$125 million dollars worth of seafood products annually, supporting 2000 jobs, and contributing to the coastal economy of the State of New Jersey.

The fishing industry in the mid-Atlantic are engaged in fisheries that are reliant upon mobile gear as the primary gear. All fishermen are seriously concerned about the negative impacts from the sites chosen and the cumulative impacts of wind energy structures. Fishing prohibitions in historically productive areas and the shift of fishing efforts are a serious threat to the economic viability of the coastal fishing economy. The area for the Maryland RFI is fished extensively by scallop, surf clam, quahog, fluke, squid, and otter trawl fishermen.

If offshore wind farms are to be built for the public interest or for the financial interest of developers than the BOEM must require strict mitigation measures to offset impact of offshore wind farms, including: Installing cables buried sufficiently so mobile gear fishermen can tow over the cables in an unrestricted manner. Designing wind farms to minimize conflict. Laying out the arrays so vessels can maintain bottom contour and tow between them. Providing mitigation payments for losses which are permanent, cumulative, or lead to increased inefficiency by reduced CPUE, increased fuel consumption, and reduced areas to fish. Allow for numerous public hearings and input. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

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Garden State Seafood Association