

Council Policy on Wind Energy

Policy Goal: *The Council supports policies for US energy development including wind energy development and operations that will sustain the health of marine ecosystems and fisheries resources while minimizing the risks to the marine environment and fisheries.*

1. Best management practices¹ should be employed throughout all phases of offshore wind development and operations to avoid adverse impacts on fish habitat and to prevent conflicts with other users groups, including recreational and commercial fisheries.
2. Developers should engage early with the fishing industry and Federal and state agencies. More detailed policies on this subject can be found in the General Policy Document.
3. Transmission cables should not be placed in areas with sensitive fish habitat such as shellfish beds, fish spawning and/or nursery habitat areas, submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV), or hard/structured habitat.
4. The best available technology should be utilized for transmission cable installation to reduce potential impacts on aquatic ecosystems. This may include horizontal directional drilling to avoid impacts to sensitive fish habitat.
5. Transmission cables should be buried to an adequate depth to reduce conflicts with other ocean uses, including fishing operations. Cables should be monitored after installation to ensure bathymetry is restored, and after large storm/meteorological events to ensure cables remain buried.
6. Project proposals should evaluate the expected impacts from scour and sedimentation beyond the footprint of the wind facilities. These should consider changes in currents. These scour impacts should be minimized to the extent possible.
7. Wind service platforms should implement adequate fuel spill response plans and protocols² for support vessels and platforms, and these plans should:
 - a. Include the identification of sensitive marine habitat;
 - b. Include methods to track the movement of spills;
 - c. Ensure adequate response equipment is immediately available; and
 - d. Allow researchers to have timely access to impacted areas, as needed.

¹ Additional information on MAFMC wind best management practices can be found in: MAFMC, 2014. Proceedings from a workshop on Offshore Wind Best Management Practices. 16 p. Available from: Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 800 North State Street, Suite 201, Dover, DE 19901, or online at <http://www.mafmc.org>

² Consistent with the US Coast Guard, US Environmental Protection Agency, Occupational Safety & Health Administration/HAZMAT, and other state or Federal requirements.

8. Research and monitoring should be conducted to better understand the impacts of persistent electromagnetic fields around transmission cables on aquatic species.
9. Noise generated by wind facilities should be minimized, including sounds produced during surveys (e.g., survey vessels), construction (e.g., pile driving, hammers), and operations (e.g., spinning turbines). Research and monitoring should be initiated to evaluate the short- and long-term impacts of wind facility noise on the environment/ecosystem.
10. Safety and navigation threats (e.g., radar disruption, vessel collisions, and security threats) should be routinely monitored in areas where fishing operations are permitted near wind facilities. Safety issues should be efficiently identified and addressed using best management practices.³
11. The Council supports the development of a compensatory mitigation fund for damages that occur to the marine environment and fish habitat as well as damages to fishing vessels, their gear, and operations/revenues, as a result of wind activities.

³ Ecology and Environment, Inc. 2014. Development of Mitigation Measures to Address Potential Use Conflicts between Commercial Wind Energy Lessees/Grantees and Commercial Fishermen on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf Report on Best Management Practices and Mitigation Measures. A final report for the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Office of Renewal Energy Programs, Herndon, VA. OCS Study BOEM 2014 - 654. 98 pp. Available at: <http://www.boem.gov/OCS-Study-BOEM-2014-654/>.