

COMMUNITY OFFSHORE WIND

Fisheries Communications Plan

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Revision Summary				
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Description of Revisions				
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1.0	08/22/2022	All	All	Original document
2.0	03/30/2023	Section 1.1	1	Updated offshore distances to lease
		Section 1.2	3-6	Updated Fisheries Team contact information and bios
		Section 1.3	6-7	Updated best practices used in development of plan

Abbreviations

ASMFC	Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
BOEM	Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
EA	Environmental Assessment
CFF	Coonamessett Farm Foundation
FL	Fisheries Liaison
FR	Fisheries Representative
FTR	Fisheries Technical Representative
F-TWG	Fisheries Technical Working Group (NYSERDA)
GARFO	Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
HMS	Highly Migratory Species
MAFMC	Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
MARCO	Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean
NEAMAP	NorthEast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program
NEFMC	New England Fishery Management Council
NEFSC	Northeast Fisheries Science Center
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NJDEP	New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NROC	Northeast Regional Ocean Council
NYSDEC	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
NYSERDA	New York State Environmental Research and Development Authority
OCLSA	Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act
RODA	Responsible Offshore Development Alliance
ROSA	Responsible Offshore Science Alliance
RWSC	Regional Wildlife Science Collaborative for Offshore Wind
SMAST	School for Marine Science & Technology (UMass Dartmouth)
USCG	U.S. Coast Guard
VIMS	Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences
WEA	Wind Energy Area

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1 Introduction

Community Offshore Wind, a joint venture of RWE Renewables and National Grid Ventures, proposes to develop the Community Offshore Wind Project (the Project), under Commercial Lease of Submerged Lands for Renewable Energy Development on the Outer Continental Shelf (Lease Area OCS-A 0539; Lease Area). Lease Area OCS-A 0539 encompasses approximately 125,964 acres and is located approximately 56 nautical miles (NM) or 104 kilometers (km) south of New York and 32NM (59 km) east of New Jersey (see Figure 1). Water depths range from 30 to 52 meters (16 to 28 fathoms).

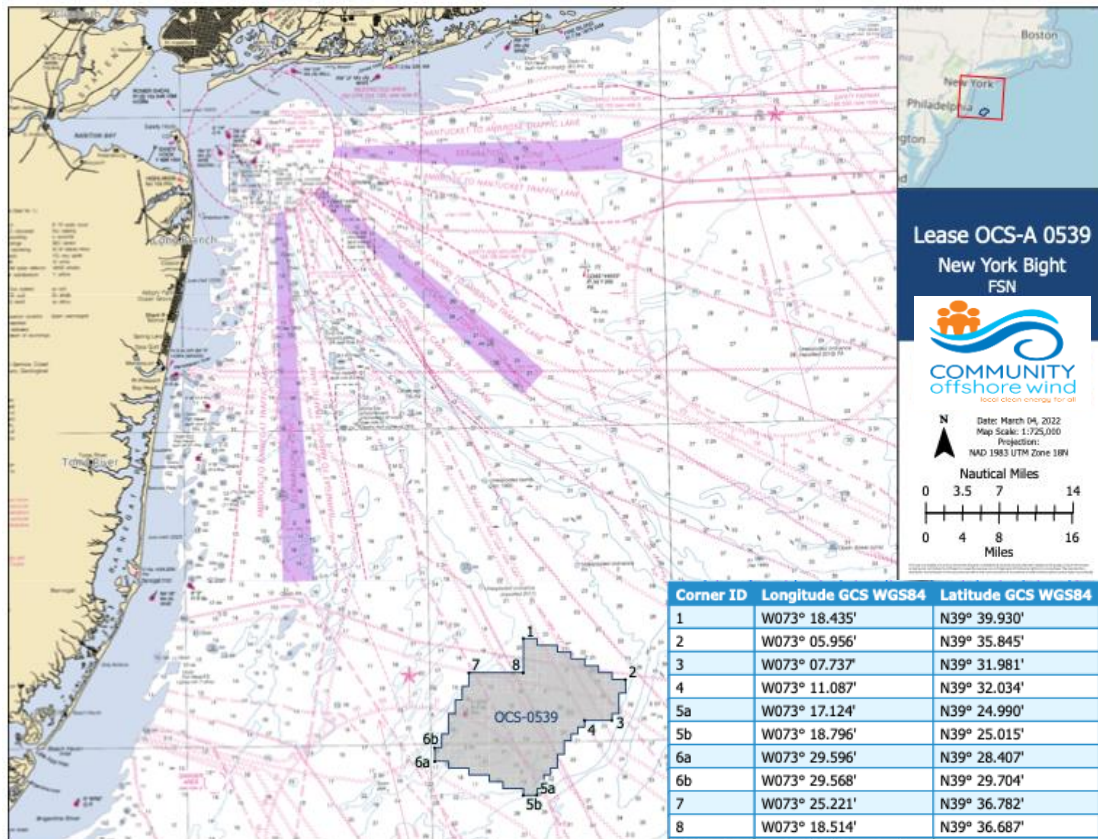


Figure 1. Location of OCS-A 0539 in relation to major navigational routes into the harbor of New York, New York. Coordinates of primary boundaries of Lease Area included in table.

As part of the Project development, Community Offshore Wind is committed to a holistic, adaptive, and integrative approach to fisheries communication and outreach, in partnership with fisheries participants and other stakeholders, including fishing organizations, fishing communities, fisheries agencies, and the general public. The Fisheries Communications Plan (Plan) is foundational to sustainable and successful Project outcomes, and is the primary tool through which the Project team will build collaborative relationships with fisheries participants and stakeholders and affected communities to inform impact avoidance throughout the lifecycle of the Project. The company’s fisheries communications team will guide the development, use, and adaptation of the Plan to reflect feedback and curate knowledge from the fishing community, and promote a shared understanding of current and historic fisheries resources and uses.

This Plan is intended to be a living document that is inclusive of all fisheries participants and stakeholders and is responsive to diverse perspectives and needs. Community Offshore Wind recognizes that effective engagement is built one relationship at a time, and that a successful process often involves difficult conversations. We value open and honest communication and are committed to an “early and often” approach to outreach.

1.1 Fisheries Communication Principles and Objectives

The following principles guide the development, implementation, and future modifications of the Plan, and reflect the core values and philosophy of Community Offshore Wind.:

- **Safety:** Promote the safety of fishermen, communities, project crews, and marine life, from Project design through implementation.
- **Respect:** Build trust through respect for the local knowledge, expertise, and concerns of the fishing community.
- **Understanding:** Develop a detailed understanding of the fisheries resources and uses in the area to inform the successful development of the project.
- **Transparency:** Promote transparency through timely two-way communication that allows for sharing clear feedback and is responsive to fisheries participants and stakeholder communication preferences.
- **Efficiency:** Ensure communication and outreach activities are internally and externally coordinated to achieve efficient communications at the appropriate cadence for all fisheries stakeholder groups.
- **Equity:** Ensure engagement efforts are comprehensive across fisheries participants, stakeholders, and communities, including underserved and non-traditional constituents.
- **Adaptability:** Respond to changing fisheries participant and stakeholder needs and circumstances as an opportunity to adapt and improve communication methods and strategies.
- **Collaboration:** Build a shared, sustainable future for area fisheries and offshore wind through collaboration and inclusivity that ultimately lessens the impacts of climate change.

The goal of Community Offshore Wind is to proactively ensure that all fishing community stakeholders are informed of the Project, and aware of the many opportunities for communication and input throughout the project lifecycle. In addition, our goal is to ensure that the Project team develops a comprehensive understanding of the individual fisheries in the Lease Area, and their social and economic significance to onshore communities within the region. The fisheries team is committed to sharing this knowledge across Community Offshore Wind’s workstreams to best serve the needs of fisheries participants and communities. Together, we are striving to achieve net positive biodiversity outcomes above and below the water line. This Plan includes time and resources for the Fisheries Team to develop and present educational materials across the Community Offshore Wind Project workstreams about relevant fisheries and other ocean user groups in and around the Lease Area and potential export cable routes. The more the Project team understands and appreciates the importance of regional fisheries, the more successful the overall Project will be. The objectives of the Plan in support of these goals are:

- Develop a detailed technical understanding of the current and historical fisheries operating and transiting within and around the Lease Area, and curate the knowledge and expertise of local fishermen and other experts to achieve this.
- Foster a proactive approach to promoting safety and deconflicting the operations of survey and construction crews and fishermen within the Lease Area that is based on the local knowledge of fishing communities and representatives.

- Collaborate with fisheries participants and stakeholders to apply their collective knowledge and understanding of fisheries resources and habitats to avoid and minimize impacts to the extent practicable throughout the Project life cycle.
- Recognize and balance the Project’s need for detailed local knowledge with the burden of engagement for fisheries participants and stakeholders through the use of thoughtful and efficient communication methods, and a commitment to coordinate outreach activities with other developers.
- Engage fishermen and stakeholders in identifying opportunities for cooperative monitoring and research that will contribute to the mutual understanding and successful shared use of the area.
- Develop comprehensive and inclusive stakeholder engagement strategies that are sensitive to the needs of both underserved communities and non-traditional stakeholders, and foster effective two-way communication.

1.2 Fisheries Team

Community Offshore Wind has assembled a fisheries team with experience that spans decades of direct experience in state, interstate, and federal fisheries management, cooperative fisheries research, commercial fisheries development, seafood processing, and commercial and recreational fisheries. The team benefits from strong advisory support from its fisheries technical advisors/fisheries representatives who have extensive experience in their respective fisheries in the project area and broader region. Community Offshore Wind’s Fisheries Team includes:

Name/Title	Role/Responsibilities	Contact Information
Deirdre Boelke Fisheries Liaison	Primary Fisheries Contact, Responsibilities below	DeirdreB@communityoffshorewind.com Cell: 978-518-0638
Michelle Duval Fisheries Liaison	Responsibilities below	MichelleD@communityoffshorewind.com Cell: 919-601-3798
Rick Robins Marine Affairs Manager	Responsibilities below	RickR@communityoffshorewind.com Cell: 757-876-3778
Brady Lybarger Commercial Mobile Fishing Gear Representative (FTA/FR)	Responsibilities below	jettyhunter@mac.com Cell: 609-602-1417
Chris Rainone Commercial Fixed Fishing Gear Representative (FTA/FR)	Responsibilities below	annicemarie@gmail.com Cell: 609-442-8633
TBD Recreational Fishing Representative	Responsibilities below	

Deirdre Boelke, Fisheries Liaison (Primary Contact), has over 20 years of staff experience with the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC). She worked on most fishery management plans during her tenure with the Council, including plan coordinator for the Atlantic sea scallop and Atlantic herring fishery management plans. She was the staff lead for the Council's Atlantic sea scallop Research Set Aside program, which coordinated cooperative research to support the management of the fishery. She also staffed the coastwide climate change scenario planning initiative and other regional and national fishery management policy projects. Deirdre is currently a representative on the Responsible Offshore Science Alliance (ROSA) Advisory Council, the New York State Environmental Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) Fisheries Technical Working Group (F-TWG), and Regional Wildlife Science Collaborative (RWSC) Habitat and Ecosystem Subcommittee.

Michelle Duval, Fisheries Liaison, has extensive experience in state and federal fisheries management, serving for 10 years with North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries, representing the agency to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, which she also chaired. She currently serves on the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) as Chair of the Research Set Aside and Ecosystem and Ocean Planning Committees, and is the Council's representative to the ROSA Advisory Council. Michelle also serves on the NEFMC's Sea Scallop, Habitat, and Ecosystem-Based Fishery Management Committees.

As Fisheries Liaisons (Liaisons), Deirdre and Michelle will represent the Project to the fishing community and serve as a primary point of contact for fisheries participants and stakeholders. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Engage directly with fisheries stakeholders, and with the project's Fisheries Technical Advisors and Representatives, to develop and curate the local knowledge to successfully avoid fisheries impacts.
- Effectively convey industry and stakeholder concerns to project management team to proactively and collaboratively identify solutions.
- Develop a flexible two-way communications network between the fishing industry and the project that is responsive to stakeholder needs and provides timely feedback.
- Coordinate communications between the Project and state and federal fisheries managers and agencies.

Rick Robins, Marine Affairs Manager, has a background in commercial fisheries development, seafood processing and export market development, and state and federal fisheries management. He served as an Associate Member of the Virginia Marine Resources Commission, chaired the MAFMC, and served as a fisheries liaison for offshore wind energy development. He engaged the Council with the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO) in its marine spatial planning process and with BOEM in the development of best practices for fisheries. He served on the Collaborative Fisheries Planning Team to develop the Collaborative Fisheries Planning for Virginia's Offshore Wind Energy Area report (OCS Study BOEM 2016-040). Rick is currently a representative on the ROSA Advisory Council, F-TWG, and RWSC Habitat and Ecosystem Subcommittee. As Marine Affairs Manager, it is Rick's role to plan and coordinate the company's marine operations and interactions with the maritime industries. Responsibilities include:

- Lead and coordinate marine affairs to support the development of the company's wind energy development projects.
- Lead engagement with all relevant maritime stakeholders, including, but not limited to: commercial and recreational fisheries, commercial shipping, owner/operators of subsea infrastructure, ports and harbors operators, the US Department of Defense, the US Coast Guard

(USCG), the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), and the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement.

- Lead development of offshore wind projects' marine affairs strategies and maritime stakeholder engagement plans.
- Provide internal coordination on all marine affairs issues and considerations to support project development.

Fisheries Technical Advisor (FTA): The role of Fisheries Technical Advisors is to provide technical expertise regarding the operations and characteristics of fisheries working in and/or transiting through the Lease Area so that potential negative fisheries impacts can be avoided, minimized, and thoughtfully considered throughout the Project lifecycle. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Provide information regarding vessel movements and configuration and fishing of mobile and fixed gears in the Lease Area.
- Describe the seasonality and distribution of fisheries over time within the Lease Area.
- Provide recommendations regarding fisheries constituent identification and interaction.

Fisheries Representative (FR): Fisheries Representatives serve the interests of the fisheries for which they have knowledge and expertise and are trusted focal points for fishing industry contact and communication regarding the Project. FRs typically also serve as FTAs to provide technical expertise to the Project team. Responsibilities of FRs include, but are not limited to:

- Identify and cultivate industry concerns and proactively share those with the Project team to facilitate shared use and fisheries impact avoidance.
- Work with the Liaisons to improve and adapt the Plan and ensure it is responsive to fisheries participant and stakeholder feedback.
- Disseminate Project information to industry to promote awareness and facilitate effective outreach and engagement.

Community Offshore Wind Plans to add FTAs/FRs across a range of fisheries active in the project area and is currently recruiting for these positions. Two FTAs/FRs joined the team in summer 2022, and we plan to hire at least one more FTA/FR with expertise in recreational fishing and support services in the coming months.

Brady Lybarger is a commercial Fisheries Technical Advisor and Fisheries Representative from the sea scallop fishery. He is based in Cape May, New Jersey and has participated in the commercial scallop fishery since 1999. He has been a scallop advisory panel member for the NEFMC for about ten years, and has participated in several Scallop Research Set Aside projects. Brady is also an avid recreational fisherman and participates in the commercial hook and line fishery, currently targeting tuna, swordfish and tilefish. He also owns a direct-to-consumer seafood business in Cape May, NJ that offers fresh seafood such as scallops, shrimp, and tuna directly to consumers since 2020.

Chris Rainone is a commercial Fisheries Technical Advisor and Fisheries Representative from the monkfish industry. Chris has fished for the past twenty years out of Barnegat Light, New Jersey. Before commercial fishing Chris worked his way through Stockton University as a commercial crabber and upon graduation he pursued a career on the ocean. Today he is the owner operator of a gillnet vessel that primarily targets monkfish, dogfish and other species. Throughout his vocation Chris has been actively involved in fisheries management to help sustain, protect, and increase the United States seafood supply. For the past ten years Chris has served on the NEFMC/MAFMC monkfish advisory panel and has been

working with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Cooperative Research Program in the collection of important fisheries data.

The goal of Community Offshore Wind's fisheries team is to ensure the objectives of the Plan are achieved through effective implementation of outreach and engagement strategies that are targeted to the specific needs and preferences of various fisheries stakeholders. In particular, the fisheries team has extensive experience working with regional Fishery Management Councils responsible for developing federal fishery management advice. The Council process is a stakeholder driven, fully public and transparent process that uses local knowledge to develop science-based plans that balance many objectives. The team intends to use many of these same principles to design a successful Project in close collaboration with stakeholders. The roles and responsibilities of team members are similar, but complementary, as described above. Overall, this fisheries team has extensive professional experience across a wide range of fisheries and is highly approachable. Each member has direct experience working with fishery stakeholders throughout the region. They already have strong relationships with fishing communities along the east coast built on trust and communications. The Plan will be updated to include contact information as additional individuals are onboarded.

1.3 Best Practices

As noted in Section 1.1, this Plan is intended to be adaptive to changing conditions and fisheries participants' and stakeholder needs and is expected to improve over time as their feedback is incorporated and as the Project matures. Community Offshore Wind is committed to open, honest, and frequent engagement with the fishing community to ensure inclusion of stakeholder input regarding project design, construction, and operation. We will work with fishing representatives to establish appropriate and accessible feedback mechanisms so that communities can see and understand our dedication to transparency and collaboration.

Development of the Plan was informed by guidance and recommended best practices that include, but are not limited to, the following resources:

- BOEM Decision Memorandum, NY Bight Final Sale Notice.¹
- Development of Mitigation Measures to Address Potential Use Conflicts between Commercial Wind Energy Lessees/Grantees and Commercial Fishermen on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf. OCS Study BOEM 2014-654.²
- FLOWW Best Practice Guidance for Offshore Renewables Developments: Recommendations for Fisheries Liaison. January 2014.³
- Guiding Principles for Offshore Wind Stakeholder Engagement (v1 10/21). NYSERDA.⁴
- Guidelines for Providing Information on Fisheries Social and Economic Conditions for Renewable Energy Development on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf. BOEM. 2020.⁵

¹ <https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/state-activities/new-york-bight-final-sale-notice-decision-memorandum>

² <https://www.boem.gov/sites/default/files/renewable-energy-program/Fishing-BMP-Final-Report-July-2014.pdf>

³ <https://www.sff.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/FLOWW-Best-Practice-Guidance-for-Offshore-Renewables-Developments-Jan-2014.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.nyserdera.ny.gov/-/media/Project/Nyserda/Files/Programs/Offshore-Wind/LSR-OSW-engageguide.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.boem.gov/sites/default/files/documents/about-boem/Social%20%26amp%3B%20Econ%20Fishing%20Guidelines.pdf>

- Information Guidelines for a Renewable Energy Construction and Operations Plan (COP), Attachment A. Version 4.0, 2020.⁶
- Central California Joint Fisheries/Cable Liaison Committee Final Agreement Between Cable Companies and Fishermen as Amended (v. 140519).⁷
- Oregon Fishermen’s Cable Committee Procedures (v. 2.6.17)⁸
- International Cable Protection Committee Government Best Practices for Protecting and Promoting Submarine Telecommunications Cables (v. 1.1).⁹
- Maine Offshore Wind Roadmap: Draft Initial Recommendations. March 1, 2022.¹⁰
- BOEM Request for Information: Guidance for Mitigating Impacts to Commercial and Recreational Fisheries from Offshore Wind Energy Development. Nov. 22, 2021.¹¹
- BOEM Draft Guidelines for Mitigating Impacts to Commercial and Recreational Fisheries on the Outer Continental Shelf. June 22, 2022.¹²
- NOAA Fisheries and BOEM Federal Survey Mitigation Implementation Strategy – Northeast U.S. Region. December 2022.¹³
- ROSA Offshore Wind Project Monitoring Framework and Guidelines. March 2021.¹⁴
- Identifying Information Needs and Approaches to Assessing Potential Impacts of Offshore Wind Farm Development in the Northeast Region. BOEM. 2015.¹⁵
- Options for Cooperation Between Commercial Fishing and Offshore Wind Energy Industries: A Review of Relevant Tools and Best Practices. SeaPlan. 2014.¹⁶
- MAFMC Best Management Practices Workshop. 2014.¹⁷
- New York State Offshore Wind Master Plan. NYSEDA. 2018.¹⁸

Importantly, the communication and engagement strategies the team proposes to use have been reviewed with several members of the commercial and recreational fishing industries as well as other stakeholders. The team is grateful for this early feedback, and will continue to refine these strategies with stakeholder input over the life of the Project.

1.4 Authorities, Regulations, and Lease Conditions

Several statutory authorities and regulations intersect the Plan, directly or indirectly. This includes requirements under subsection 8(p) of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCSLA) that BOEM ensure

⁶ <https://www.boem.gov/sites/default/files/documents/about-boem/COP%20Guidelines.pdf>

⁷ http://www.cencalcablefishery.com/uploads/2/2/6/5/22655546/140519_final_agreement_as_amended.pdf

⁸ <http://www.ofcc.com/Procedures2.6.17.pdf>

⁹ <https://www.iscpc.org/documents/?id=3733>

¹⁰ <https://www.maineoffshorewind.org/working-group-recommendations/environment-wildlife/>

¹¹ <https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/boem-2021-0083-0001>

¹² <https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/draft-fisheries-mitigation-guidance>

¹³ <https://repository.library.noaa.gov/view/noaa/47925>

¹⁴ <https://www.rosascience.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/ROSA-Offshore-Wind-Project-Monitoring-Framework-and-Guidelines.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://www.boem.gov/sites/default/files/environmental-stewardship/Environmental-Studies/Renewable-Energy/OCS-Study-BOEM-2015-037.pdf>

¹⁶ <https://osf.io/preprints/marxiv/sfu9e/>

¹⁷ https://www.mafmc.org/s/MAFMC_Offshore-Wind-Workshop_Final-Report-4nan.pdf

¹⁸ <https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/-/media/Project/Nyserda/Files/Publications/Research/Biomass-Solar-Wind/Master-Plan/Offshore-Wind-Master-Plan.pdf>

any activities provide for protection of the environment and prevent interference with reasonable uses of the federal Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), including fishing. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA; 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 *et seq.*) also requires that BOEM evaluate the social and economic impacts of any potential project, and BOEM's own regulations require that it coordinate with other federal agencies to avoid conflicts among users and maximize the economic and ecological benefits of potential projects (30 CFR 585.102(a)(5)).

This Plan is intended to develop the necessary information for the Project to meet these requirements and additional regulatory provisions within 30 CFR Part 585 Subpart F (e.g., communications with stakeholders, agencies, and other potentially affected parties; social and economic conditions of commercial and recreational fisheries; and measures to avoid, minimize, reduce, eliminate, and monitor environmental impacts).

Community Offshore Wind is also subject to a number of Lease-specific terms, conditions, and stipulations contained in Appendix C of the Lease agreement. The design and implementation of this Plan is intended to meet the conditions included in Section 3 (Reporting), specifically 3.1, 3.1.1, 3.1.2.1, 3.1.2.4, and 3.1.3.

2 Project Background

2.1 Community Offshore Wind Lease Area

On March 21, 2021, BOEM announced its intent to conduct an Environmental Assessment (EA) for activities associated with site assessment (e.g., installation of meteorological buoys) and characterization (e.g., biological, geophysical, archaeological, etc. surveys) of the New York Bight Wind Energy Areas (WEAs), including cable corridors and project easements. A draft EA was released for public comment on August 10, 2021, and a final EA was issued on December 16, 2021, that concluded site assessment and characterization activities would have no significant impact on the environment in any of the wind energy areas.

On June 14, 2021, BOEM published a Proposed Sale Notice (PSN) for eight potential lease areas. The Final Sale Notice (FSN) was published on January 12, 2022, proposing the auction of six final lease areas. The Community Offshore Wind Lease Area was substantially modified by BOEM between the PSN and FSN to deconflict and address high value commercial fisheries, recreational fishing hot spots, and benthic habitats in the region. Specifically, BOEM removed from consideration a portion of adjacent lease OCS-A 0540 and all of OCS-A 0543 (adjacent to OCS-A 0540), as these areas had the highest landings and revenue from the surfclam fishery and significant overlap with habitats identified through New Jersey's Prime Fishing Areas dataset. As a result, BOEM expanded Lease OCS-A 0539 westward and removed OCS-A 0540 due to its reduced viability as a stand-alone lease¹⁹.

BOEM also adjusted the eastern border of Lease OCS-A 0539 to establish a 2.5 NM buffer between the Lease and the nearby scallop fishery access area in response to fishing industry requests, identification of important fish habitats, and the occurrence of active scallop fishing activity adjacent to the access area²⁰. Additionally, 11,637 acres of the Lease Area are subject to a no surface occupancy Lease stipulation (i.e., a permanent prohibition on placement of objects on the ocean surface) along the northern, southern,

¹⁹ [New York Bight Final Sale Notice Decision Memorandum](#), p. 10

²⁰ [New York Bight Final Sale Notice Decision Memorandum](#), p. 9-10

and eastern borders of the lease. The no-occupancy areas on the northern and southern borders contribute to the 2.44 nautical mile transit corridors between adjacent lease areas in response to fishing community and Department of Defense requests, and in consideration of vessel traffic patterns BOEM's proactive establishment of corridors at the northern and southern boundaries of Lease OCS-A 0539 provides additional accommodation of commercial and recreational fisheries transits through the Hudson South lease areas.

This Plan has been developed at the outset of the site assessment and characterization component of the Community Offshore Wind Project, which will inform the development of a Construction and Operations Plan (COP) for the Lease, and will be adjusted in response to fisheries participant and stakeholder feedback. The COP will be subject to regulatory review, as required by law, that will provide additional opportunities for public input prior to construction and implementation. As the Project matures into the construction and operation phases, the Plan will also evolve to reflect the communication and engagement needs specific to these Project stages.

2.2 RWE Renewables and National Grid

Community Offshore Wind is a joint venture of RWE Renewables and National Grid and is dedicated to providing clean energy, good local jobs, and building a network of trust in the communities it serves. RWE is a global leader in the development of offshore wind facilities, with 20 successful projects in the past two decades, while National Grid brings expertise in renewable energy delivery systems in the northeast and internationally. Both organizations have ambitious objectives for achieving net zero emissions in the coming decades through innovations such as testing recyclable turbine blades and piloting green hydrogen, while generating sustainable economic opportunities for local communities.

RWE and National Grid share a common goal of advancing an equitable clean energy future through the core principles of promoting health, safety, and care for the environment and community throughout the lifecycle of the Project. This includes a commitment to continuous improvement and evolution by truly listening to stakeholders, integrating that feedback directly into the development and design of the Project, and becoming a standard-bearer for accountability and transparency.

3 Fisheries Characterization

Both commercial and recreational fisheries operate within the Lease Area, and as noted in Section 2.1, BOEM implemented modifications to reduce interactions with high value commercial fisheries and fish habitats. While data limitations may preclude precise spatial identification of specific fisheries working in or transiting the Lease, one of the objectives of this Plan is to curate the detailed knowledge necessary to fill in data gaps in collaboration with fisheries participants and stakeholders.

3.1 Stakeholder Identification

Information used to identify categories of fisheries stakeholders includes available commercial, recreational, and habitat data sets from the MARCO Data Portal, Northeast Ocean Data Portal, aggregated commercial Vessel Trip Reports (VTRs) from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), as well as proactive outreach to individual commercial and recreational fishery participants. Additional fisheries stakeholders will be identified by the Liaisons in coordination with FRs and FTAs. The Liaisons will work with these stakeholders as well as state and federal fisheries managers to fill data gaps and ensure existing data are appropriately interpreted so that fisheries impacts can be avoided to the extent practicable.

In addition to commercial and recreational fisheries participants and stakeholders, Community Offshore Wind understands the significance and value of other coastal and marine recreational activities, including whale watching, surfing, paddleboarding, SCUBA diving, kayaking, sailing, and birdwatching, among others. The regional ocean planning bodies in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic (the Northeast Regional Ocean Council [NROC] and MARCO, respectively), in collaboration with the states and recreational user groups, have coordinated the collection of data and information to identify important use areas, patterns, and demographics. The Project's outreach activities will include these recreational ocean user groups, and the Plan will be updated to reflect their communication needs and preferences that are not included in other Project stakeholder engagement plans. While some engagement efforts may overlap due to the intersection of multiple interests, these will be coordinated among the Project team.

Community Offshore Wind recognizes the importance of equity and inclusivity in stakeholder identification and engagement, particularly for underserved communities, who face challenges that often prevent full participation in public processes. Consistent with the principles described in the NMFS Draft Equity and Environmental Justice Strategy²¹, the Plan seeks to improve Project awareness and identification of underserved communities so that outreach activities can be tailored to address their specific barriers to engagement. This includes underserved components of traditional fisheries stakeholder designations, e.g., commercial, recreational, for-hire, and private anglers, as well as other ocean users. The intent is to build an engagement network and approaches that are comprehensive across fisheries and ocean user groups, and promote participation by non-traditional stakeholders and others who may not typically be involved in these processes.

3.2 Current and Historical Fisheries Operations

3.2.1 Commercial Fisheries

According to federal VTR data, which includes spatial reporting requirements, commercial fisheries operating in the Lease Area are primarily Atlantic sea scallop and surfclam, but also include summer flounder, monkfish, and inconsistent harvest of black sea bass and skates. These fisheries are harvested with a variety of gear types. Dredges are used almost exclusively in the sea scallop fishery, while surfclams are harvested solely with hydraulic dredges. Summer flounder and black sea bass are pursued with bottom trawls, although pot gear is also occasionally used for black sea bass. Monkfish harvest in the area is primarily subject to targeted use of anchored gillnets on a seasonal basis. Examination of VTR data from the MARCO Data Portal indicate that dredges are the predominate gear type used in the Project area, but also show limited bottom trawl, pot, and gillnet gear. Important commercial ports with harvest from within the Lease Area include Atlantic City, Barnegat Light, Point Pleasant, and Cape May, New Jersey. Other ports with commercial harvest include Long Beach, and Montauk, New York; New Bedford, Massachusetts; and ports in the Hampton Roads area of Virginia.

Limited information exists regarding commercial fisheries that may be transiting the area. While spatial reporting is a requirement of the VTR program, these data are coarse and not intended for fine-scale representation of where fisheries operate. Vessels participating in specific commercial fisheries are subject to Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) requirements, including those in the sea scallop, surfclam, and monkfish fisheries. Examination of VMS data in the MARCO Data Portal indicates most surfclam harvest has occurred in the western two-thirds of the Lease Area, while most sea scallop harvest has occurred in the eastern third. VMS data also suggest possible transit and/or historical trips from mid-

²¹ https://media.fisheries.noaa.gov/2022-05/2022-05-NOAAFisheries-EEJ_508.pdf

water trawl fisheries such as those for Atlantic mackerel and squid, as well as Northeast Multispecies (groundfish). It is important to note that VMS regulations generally require vessels to maintain VMS units in operational mode at all times, even when participating in a non-VMS fishery. Automatic Identification System (AIS) data may provide additional information regarding commercial vessel transit and use of the Lease Area, but the detailed local knowledge of fishermen is critical to identifying and properly characterizing these data. Project leadership has proactively met with stakeholders in Shinnecock, New York, Greenport, NY, Barnegat Light, Belford, and Cape May, New Jersey, and other regional ports to begin this dialogue. Fishery information will be updated as local fisheries knowledge is developed in collaboration with fishery participants.

Effective April 1, 2022, NMFS implemented the Atlantic Sea Scallop 2022-2023 fishing year regulations, which include the New York Bight Scallop Rotational Closed Area. The closed area encompasses the eastern half of the Lease Area (as well as the entirety of OCS-A 0538 and the southern half of OCS-A 0537), and was established to protect several scallop year classes that are anticipated to support future fishing activities. The Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences (VIMS) 2021 dredge survey indicated the presence of 1-2 year old scallops in the northeastern portion of the Lease Area. Based on normal growth rates, these scallops would be expected to be available to the fishery within 2-4 years.

3.2.2 Recreational Fisheries

Information on recreational fisheries operating in and transiting through the Lease Area is also limited. Similar to commercial fisheries, for-hire vessels operating in federally-managed fisheries are subject to VTR requirements and information from the MARCO data portal indicates occasional for-hire fishing (charter and party boats) activity within the Lease Area, though higher amounts of activity inshore of and beyond the Lease Area were observed. Seasonally-important recreational fisheries for both private anglers and for-hire fleets have included summer flounder, black sea bass, scup, and bluefish, as well as pelagic species such as dolphinfish (mahi mahi) and Highly Migratory Species (HMS) such as bluefin and yellowfin tunas. Blueline and golden tilefishes (deepwater bottom species) have also increased in popularity over the years, although they are targeted over bottom contours seaward of the Lease Area. It is likely that important ports for the for-hire and private boat fleets that may be transiting and/or operating within the area include Barnegat Light, Point Pleasant, Cape May, Little Egg Inlet, Ocean City, New Jersey, and additional ports in New York.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) maintains an Artificial Reef Program, although the majority of reefs are within 2NM to 8NM of shore; only one reef is located 23NM from shore and is well to the southwest of the Lease Area. As noted in Section 2.1, the New Jersey Prime Fishing Areas dataset was used to deconflict the Lease Area with recreational fishing hot spots and activities. While none of the Prime Fishing Areas overlap the Lease Area, three sites are adjacent to it: 1) Fingers is an irregular lump adjacent to the southwestern (inshore) boundary of the Lease that is surrounded by sandy, shelly bottom; 2) Triple Wrecks South is a sandy slough so named for the wrecks on it, and abuts the northeastern corner of the Lease, extending to the north-northeast and south-southwest of the Lease Area; 3) The CORVALLIS, an isolated wreck adjacent to the northern boundary of the Lease Area and the southern boundary of lease OCS-A 0538. Curated local knowledge will also be critical to identifying information gaps for recreational fisheries, locations of any known structures or other important oceanographic features within the Lease and surrounding area, and appropriately interpreting existing data so that impacts can be thoughtfully considered and avoided. The fisheries team will compile the available data on any known hangs within the project area. No named shipwrecks are located within the Lease Area.

3.2.3 Other Ocean Uses

Data from the Northeast Coastal and Marine Recreational Use Characterization Study conducted by NROC²² and recreational ocean use workshops conducted by the mid-Atlantic states are available via the NROC and MARCO Data Portals, and provide a footprint of the range and general density of shore-based, coastal, and ocean uses from Virginia through Maine. As noted previously, these include whale and dolphin-watching, shore-based wildlife viewing, diving, recreational boating, sailing, surfing, and kayaking. The information currently in the data portals does not display overlap of any of these activities within the Lease Area, but indicates several activities occur to the east and south along the continental shelf break, and to the north along the Hudson Canyon and vicinity. The data layers show many of these activities have occurred inshore of the Lease Area and in higher densities, and could be impacted by future cable routes.

Many coastal and ocean recreational users and operators belong to organizations and/or clubs promoting resource conservation and enjoyment of these recreational pursuits. The fisheries team will coordinate our outreach to these groups with the efforts of other Project team members to reduce stakeholder engagement burden, increase efficiency, and ensure we are providing accessible opportunities for two-way communication and feedback. Our objective is to ensure recreational users are able to participate throughout the Project development process.

3.3 Fisheries Habitats

The Lease Area overlaps Essential Fish Habitats (EFH) for various life stages of most species managed by the MAFMC, with the exception of golden and blueline tilefish. It is also designated EFH for different life stages of several groundfish species managed by the NEFMC, as well as monkfish, skates, and sea scallops. EFH designations for multiple HMS species occur in the area, primarily sharks but also bluefin and skipjack Tunas. According to information in the MARCO Data Portal, benthic habitats within the Lease Area include mostly moderate to high flat gravel and sand, with some sandy depressions.

3.4 Fisheries Management

The fisheries occurring and potentially transiting the Lease Area are managed by a suite of federal and state agencies and partners, including the NJDEP Division of Fish & Wildlife, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), MAFMC (e.g., summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, surfclam), NEFMC (sea scallop, monkfish [jointly with MAFMC]), the ASMFC, NMFS HMS Division (tunas, billfishes, sharks), NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO), and NMFS Northeast Fisheries Science Center. Each entity is responsible for the stewardship of fisheries resources through the conduct and/or oversight of biological and habitat surveys, fishery-dependent data collection and analyses, and policy implementation. These efforts contribute to a fisheries management framework that is coordinated to varying degrees across state and federal jurisdictions. Each organization has constituent outreach, communication, and public engagement processes that are important to the success of both individual and collective management initiatives.

This Plan recognizes the knowledge and expertise of agencies and partners and seeks to integrate their input and experience in stakeholder mapping to promote sustainable shared use of the Project Area. While the project area is most closely located to New Jersey and New York, the fisheries communications

²² http://archive.neoceanplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Recreation-Study_Final-Report.pdf

team is also committed to understanding the relationship of other state's fleets to the area. Given the regional nature and economic importance of the fisheries operating in and/or transiting through the Lease, the fisheries communications team will engage state agencies from North Carolina through Maine. Project leadership has proactively reached out to states and federal partners to begin this dialogue and develop relationships with industry stakeholders. This Plan has identified communication with fishery managers as a potential opportunity for collaboration among developers. The team recognizes that multiple state and federal agencies have already invested large amounts of resources and time to support development of wind energy to date, and this is an area where efficiency can be explored. The team will also ensure that engagement with marine fisheries agencies is coordinated with the Project's Agency Communications Plan to reduce duplication of effort.

4 Offshore Project Operations

Offshore survey activities will occur in the Lease Area and potential export cable corridors as part of site assessment and characterization activities. One of the primary objectives of any survey campaign will be proactive coordination with commercial and recreational fleets to develop comprehensive awareness of the seasonality and pattern of fisheries activities so that impacts are avoided and deconflicted, particularly during peak fishing seasons. The goal of the Plan is to consider each survey campaign as an opportunity to improve two-way communications and feedback mechanisms between the Project and fisheries stakeholders as part of an adaptive communications framework. As the project matures from site assessment to construction and operations, this section of the Plan will be updated accordingly.

4.1 Survey Operations and Site Assessment

Site characterization and assessment will involve high-resolution geophysical, geotechnical, and benthic activities, such as depth sounding with multi-beam echo sounders to determine bathymetry, seafloor imaging with sidescan sonar, sub-bottom profilers to determine stratigraphy below the seabed, magnetometers to map ferrous returns, collection of sediment cores, and collection of benthic sediment samples to aid in habitat characterization. These activities are likely to involve multiple vessels depending on location and water depth, particularly once specific export cable corridors have been identified.

As a component of the Project's proactive approach to fisheries impact avoidance, a pre-survey risk assessment will be conducted in advance of each survey campaign to identify spatial and temporal overlap with commercial and recreational fishing activities. The assessment will be conducted in coordination with FRs and fishery participants to appropriately characterize peak and seasonal activity, and will include mitigation measures designed to avoid, minimize, and mitigate any specific fisheries risks identified. Such measures will be collaboratively developed and could include a protocol for calibration of sonar gear to identify appropriate features for this activity and specifically avoid popular fishing structures, as well as use of scout vessels. Onboard fisheries liaisons (OFLs) may also be employed depending on the survey methods used and the potential for interaction with fishing activities and/or gear. The fisheries communication team has been actively involved in the initial survey planning phase of this Project to ensure fishery and ecosystem issues are integrated in the design and execution of all survey operations.

4.2 Survey Team Communications

The Liaisons will work with the survey team during each pre-survey risk assessment (Section 4.1) to provide forecasts of expected commercial and recreational fisheries activities, state and federal resource surveys, recreational fishing tournaments (e.g., HMS), and known fixed-gear placements to facilitate

impact avoidance. The Liaisons will conduct daily briefings with survey vessels to provide the survey teams with updated information regarding fisheries operating in or transiting through the survey area prior to initiation of each day's activities, and will receive feedback from the survey team daily. The Liaisons will serve as the primary contact for both industry and the survey team to identify and resolve any issues that occur during survey operations, and will develop notices of survey operations for distribution to commercial and recreational fishery participants and stakeholders via communication methods and outlets identified for each sector (see sections 5.2 and 5.3), as well as USCG Notices to Mariners. All notices will be distributed to the fishing industry as early as practicable and no later than two weeks in advance of any scheduled survey or site assessment activity. The Liaisons will also work with the FRs to ground-truth and update information conveyed to survey teams. Survey vessels will monitor VHF channel 16 at all times during survey operations for communication with fishing vessels in the area on a bridge-to-bridge basis.

Given the importance of timely and accurate two-way feedback during survey preparation and operations, the communications team is exploring innovative digital technologies, to communicate survey activity, receive stakeholder input, and facilitate avoidance of fisheries impacts. If successful, these could reduce the burden of engagement on fishing communities, while also promoting safe co-occurrence of fishing and survey operations. The team is committed to continued pursuit of approaches that support efficient and innovative communications for the benefit of fishing participants and stakeholders.

4.3 Gear Loss and Interactions

While every effort will be made to avoid and deconflict fisheries impacts prior to each survey campaign, the Project has established a gear loss claim procedure for loss or damage to fishing gear due to survey activities (please see Appendix 3). The procedure establishes the reporting process for fishermen who experience a gear loss or damage associated with the project's offshore operations, and confirm the Project's commitment to processing claims for lost/damaged fishing gear in a timely manner. A Survey Fishing Gear Incident Form and procedures will be used by contracted survey vessels to report any gear interactions, and a Gear Loss/Damage Claim Form is available to fishermen who experience a gear loss or damage event associated with any vessels contracted to the Project and will be posted on the Project website. The Liaisons will be the point of contact for fishermen to assist them with this process. As per the lease stipulations, an annual summary of claims will be provided to BOEM.

Community Offshore Wind acknowledges the concerns expressed by fishermen regarding the potential differences in gear loss/damage claim processes across different Projects. We are committed to working with other leaseholders to develop procedures that will minimize stakeholder burden and increase transparency and consistency.

5 Fisheries Communication Strategies

The communication strategies outlined below are built on the Project's core communication principles to meet the Plan objectives described in Section 1.1. These approaches are intended to be specific and adaptable to the needs of each stakeholder group and promote effective, two-way engagement that contributes to the safe, successful, and sustainable shared use of the Lease Area. This Plan anticipates using a combination of engagement methods including one-on-one interviews, small group meetings in fishing communities, larger workshops that potentially include other developers and multiple stakeholder types, etc. to identify key concerns and provide avenues for stakeholders to contribute their observations and requests. Each component outlined in the following sections should function as an interconnected node in a broader communications network to advance shared understanding between the Project and

fisheries stakeholders that is based on the curated local knowledge of the fishing community. As the network and strategies evolve throughout the Project lifetime, the Plan will be updated accordingly, and revised versions will be posted on the Community Offshore Wind website. As noted previously, the fisheries team proactively engaged some members of the commercial and recreational fishing communities to discuss the suitability of various communications nodes and approaches.

The Project is also committed to understanding the differing communication preferences within and among stakeholder groups. A successful Project outcome requires addressing these needs in a manner that is sensitive to cultural and language differences, as well as accessibility to information sources. The Liaisons will coordinate with FRs to identify specific approaches that meet unique stakeholder needs and promote inclusivity.

Community Offshore Wind recognizes the high stakeholder engagement burden given the number of active leases in the Mid-Atlantic and New England regions. The Project is committed to building initiatives with other developers to streamline this burden, while acknowledging the inherent tension this creates among competing entities. For example, the team has discussed it may be more efficient for multiple developers to host topic-based workshops so stakeholders could provide input on a particular issue, compared to area-specific feedback. This team is aware of the time constraints many fishery stakeholders have and efficiency is a core objective of this plan.

5.1 Commercial Fisheries Communications

The Liaisons will work closely with the FRs and industry to develop the most appropriate methods (e.g., paper, text, email, public listserves, social media, websites) to reach the greatest number of stakeholders, being mindful of the cadence and mode of information delivery. Approaches will be tailored to each fishery and/or communication node, although some overlap is expected. The Liaisons will also develop and maintain a list of contacts for various commercial fishing constituencies (e.g., fish houses/dealers/processors, commercial associations, key fishery participants, etc.).

5.1.1 Fisheries Operating in and Transiting Lease

As described in Section 3.2.1, the primary commercial fisheries operating in the Lease Area are dredge fisheries, but some bottom and mid-water trawl, gillnet, and pot effort has also historically occurred in and/or transited through this area. The Liaisons will work with the FRs, FTAs, local industry, state and federal marine fisheries agencies, and regional fishery management councils to identify stakeholders with current and historical knowledge who may be available for direct communication. Engagement with industry members who can interpret and fill information gaps is critical to a shared understanding and impact avoidance. For example, our marine affairs team proactively engaged industry with Project engineers to promote technical understanding of dredge gear configuration and operation. Such exchanges can also inform development of appropriate communication strategies for different phases of the Project.

In recognition of stakeholder burden, the Liaisons will work with the FRs to coordinate in-person engagements with individuals and groups. Anticipated communication methods during survey activities include, but are not limited to: USCG Notices to Mariners; local notices to fishermen via appropriate state agency communication lists; text and/or email messages to individuals operating in the same fishery/gear type; social media and postings on the Project website; and distribution/posting of paper notices of survey operations at appropriate locations.

5.1.2 Commercial Fisheries Associations/Representatives

Commercial fisheries associations and representatives serve a valuable role for commercial stakeholders as trusted sources of information regarding management issues under consideration and upcoming regulatory changes at both the state and federal level. Most, if not all, send out regular communications to their memberships, hold leadership (i.e., board of directors) meetings, and may host or participate in community engagement events. The Liaisons will work with the FR to identify a list of appropriate organizations for outreach regarding the Project. The Liaisons will endeavor to provide general Project information and fishery notices regarding survey activities to associations and representatives for distribution to their membership, attend association meetings to listen to and provide feedback regarding industry concerns (as appropriate and requested), and be available as a resource. The Liaisons will work with other leaseholder liaisons to coordinate communication and engagement efforts to reduce the burden on organizations to respond to multiple requests. As appropriate, the Project may also host a booth at trade shows where representatives of commercial fishing organizations may be in attendance to provide information that organizations may distribute to their members.

5.1.3 Shoreside Infrastructure/Communities

Shoreside infrastructure such as docks, fish houses/dealer/processor facilities, and vessel repair shops can be important communication sites for busy commercial stakeholders entering or leaving port. The Liaisons will work with the FRs to identify shoreside infrastructure hubs for posting of fishery notices, via electronic or traditional media as desired and appropriate, regarding upcoming survey activities. The Liaisons will also engage directly with shoreside infrastructure owners to establish communication and serve as a resource for industry concerns and questions.

5.2 Recreational Fisheries Communications

Recreational fishermen receive information using similar modalities as commercial fishermen (i.e., social media, websites, other electronic platforms, paper) as well as similar types of information sources (e.g., USCG Notices to Mariners, organizations and clubs, marinas, boat ramps). The Liaisons will work with FRs to identify and tailor the mode and frequency of communications as appropriate for each recreational stakeholder constituency to promote avoidance of recreational fisheries impacts throughout the life cycle of the Project.

5.2.1 Fisheries Operating in and Transiting Lease

The majority of offshore recreational fishing effort operating out of New Jersey and New York is from private anglers fishing for summer flounder, black sea bass, and bluefish, as well as striped bass, sharks, tunas, and other HMS species. However, spatial data on recreational fisheries are limited and the team plans to work directly with recreational captains and angling organizations to develop a detailed understanding of recreational effort, including for HMS species, within and around the Lease Area. This will include efforts by the fisheries team to understand fisheries transits through the project area. It is likely that targeted, deepwater trips (such as for bluefin and golden tilefish), which may be combined with trips for HMS species, will transit the Lease Area on the way to fishing grounds seaward of the Lease. In 2021, there were over 4,000 HMS Angling Permits homeported in New Jersey (second only to Florida) and just under 2,800 homeported in New York, indicating high interest in these fisheries²³. The Liaisons

²³ [2021 Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation Report \(SAFE\) for Atlantic Highly Migratory Species](#), p. 69

will work with the FRs, state and federal agencies, regional fishery management councils and partners, as well as local fishing clubs, to identify anglers with historic experience in and near the Lease Area. Whenever possible, engagement with local fishermen to curate their knowledge and determine communication preferences will be coordinated with other leaseholders to minimize engagement burden. The fisheries team is committed to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of recreational fishery outreach through collaboration with other leaseholders.

5.2.2 For-Hire Fisheries

For-hire fisheries (charter boats and headboats) are socially, culturally, and economically important to surrounding shoreside communities, and the Liaisons will develop outreach protocols suited to this unique sector. The for-hire trips most likely to be transiting and/or operating in the lease area are HMS trips; as of October 2021, there were just over 400 HMS Charter/Headboat Permit homeported in New Jersey (second to Florida), and about 370 homeported in New York²⁴. The Liaisons will coordinate with the FRs and state and federal agencies to identify marinas that serve as hubs for the charter and headboat fleets, and will engage marina operators as important constituents in communication efforts. As noted above, outreach and communication methods will likely include written/posted materials regarding survey activities, as well as electronic and social media, but the mode and frequency will be tailored according to feedback from marina operators.

5.2.3 Recreational Tournaments

Recreational fishing tournaments occur seasonally, generally spring through fall, and tournaments focused on HMS species are most likely to incur transit through the lease area. The Liaisons will work with for-hire captains, recreational fishing organizations, and agencies to develop a list of tournaments in the area, and will post written survey information at tournament locations, as well as communicate to tournament organizers the timing and extent of survey operations. For tournament fleets that may transit the project area, tournaments will be provided in advance with communications materials describing any offshore survey operations or related activities to promote awareness and safety. The project will also offer to send a representative to tournament captain's meetings as appropriate to notify the captains of any offshore operations.

5.2.4 Recreational Fisheries Organizations/Representatives

A number of recreational fishing organizations exist in the region and serve important roles as communication and information dissemination nodes for private anglers and for-hire fleets. Some serve both constituencies while others focus specifically on one stakeholder group, but most communicate regularly with their memberships via electronic communications, social media, and/or printed newsletters. Many organizations participate in the fisheries management process, and some host fishing tournaments or sponsor community events. The Liaisons will develop a list of recreational fishing organizations to engage in dialogue regarding survey activities, member concerns and feedback, and determine the appropriate modes and frequency of communication in coordination with organization leadership.

²⁴ [2021 Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation Report \(SAFE\) for Atlantic Highly Migratory Species](#), p. 68

5.2.5 Shoreside Infrastructure/Communities

Marinas, boat ramps, and tackle shops are components of shoreside infrastructure that are also important communication conduits for the recreational fishing community. The Liaisons will work with state agency staff, FRs, and recreational fishing organizations to identify high use infrastructure for posting of survey information. Tackle shops or sporting goods stores may also serve as community hubs, and some occasionally sponsor or host lectures or information sessions for clients/constituents. The Liaisons will explore the possibility of adding these as engagement nodes and coordinating with other leaseholders in outreach activities tailored for these groups.

5.3 State and Federal Management Entities and Agencies

State and federal fisheries agencies and regional management entities participate in the stewardship of fisheries occurring in and transiting through the Lease Area, and conduct or coordinate several fishery-independent surveys within the Lease Area and/or within potential export cable corridors. These surveys provide critically important information for regional fisheries assessment and management, and data to inform the Project and Plan goal of fisheries impact avoidance. The Liaisons will work with state and federal agency staff to develop a list of resource surveys, and with survey coordinators to avoid scheduling conflicts between resource and project survey operations. The intent of these activities is to ensure the concerns as well as expertise of agencies and management entities are incorporated throughout the project lifecycle.

This Plan acknowledges that a similar communication burden exists for agencies as for stakeholders given the pace of offshore leasing activities, and is committed to working with other developers to coordinate and streamline these efforts whenever possible. As noted previously, the fisheries team will also coordinate efforts with the Project's Agency Communications Plan. The objective is to develop an appropriate frequency and method of communication with state and federal agencies, fisheries management entities, and other partners that will promote future collaborative opportunities (see Section 6) and support agency climate resiliency initiatives.

5.3.1 Federal Agencies

The Plan will coordinate engagement with GARFO, Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC), and the NMFS HMS Division to ensure that Project survey activities are appropriately communicated and scheduled to avoid impacts to important agency biological surveys, such as: the NEFSC Spring and Fall Bottom Trawl Surveys; Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (NEAMAP) Survey; Ecosystem Monitoring Surveys; North Atlantic Right Whale Aerial Surveys; Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Aerial Surveys; Marine Mammal, Sea Turtle, and Seabird Ship-based Surveys; Seal Aerial Abundance Surveys; Coastal Shark Bottom Longline Surveys; and the Cooperative Atlantic States Shark Popping and Longline/Gillnet Survey. The Liaisons will also work with federal agencies and the managers of industry collaborative resource surveys (e.g., School of Marine Science and Technology (SMAST) at University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth, Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) and Coonamessett Farm Foundation (CFF) scallop surveys, NOAA/surflam industry resource surveys) to align Project survey schedules with these activities. The Plan recognizes the impacts that construction and operations of offshore wind facilities will have on these critical surveys. An objective of this engagement is to explore opportunities to develop future project monitoring activities that are compatible with existing surveys and can contribute to the management of fisheries resources, consistent with the Draft NOAA Fisheries and BOEM Federal Survey Mitigation Strategy.

5.3.2 State Agencies

Although the Lease Area is closest to New York and New Jersey, the Liaisons will coordinate engagement with state marine fisheries agencies from North Carolina through Maine due to the regional nature of the fisheries operating in and transiting through the Lease. Project leadership proactively contacted NJDEP and NYSDEC, as well as the NYSERDA, and other state agencies, to begin building these important relationships. Since then, the fisheries team has conducted targeted outreach with fisheries division staff from several state agencies to explore and discuss the proposed communication strategies. Further engagement with the NYSERDA Fisheries Technical Working Group (F-TWG), of which RWE is a member, and the NJDEP Offshore Wind (OSW) Working Group is anticipated. The Liaisons will provide an overview of the Plan to state agency staff for feedback and suggestions, and to determine the appropriate communication methods, outlets, and tempo for agency engagement. The Liaisons will also explore leveraging agency communication portals with staff to expand stakeholder engagement and awareness of the Project, and to promote inclusion of all interested and affected constituencies. As noted, objectives of the Plan include coordination of Project survey operations so as to avoid impacts to state biological resource surveys, and incorporation of agency expertise.

5.3.3 Regional Fishery Management Entities

The regional fishery management councils and the ASMFC are important stewards of marine fisheries resources, working in partnership with each other and NMFS to develop and implement regulations that promote sustainable future fishing opportunities. The MAFMC and NEFMC have extensive communication and stakeholder engagement networks, and the Liaisons will work with both councils to provide project updates as appropriate (e.g., an introductory presentation to the MAFMC at its August 2022 meeting) and to determine acceptable methods and frequency of communications. This may include working with staff to provide survey notices and fact sheets for the Joint NEFMC/MAFMC Offshore Wind webpage and/or for distribution via email and social media postings. Similarly, the ASMFC is responsible for fishery management plans in state waters along the entire east coast. Therefore, they too have an extensive stakeholder network including commercial, recreational, and other interested parties. The team will also explore coordination of information “open houses” with other developers to provide opportunities for stakeholder feedback in conjunction with Council and/or Commission meetings.

5.4 Other Partners

Multiple organizations are active participants in the conversations surrounding development of offshore wind in the U.S., including the Responsible Offshore Development Alliance (RODA), ROSA, the RWSC, academic institutions, and several environmental nongovernmental organizations. Community Offshore Wind recognizes the contributions and continuing efforts of RODA, ROSA, RWSC, scientists, and others to improving the dialogue between fishing communities and the offshore wind industry, developing recommendations regarding impact fees and mitigation, hosting workshops and other collaborations, and conducting research and monitoring to promote a shared understanding of the state of the science and future scientific needs. The Project’s fisheries communications team is committed to participating in and contributing to these efforts and future initiatives, and providing efficient and productive settings for early engagement and dialogue.

5.5 Communications Tracking

The Plan includes a stakeholder management system to record efforts across all Project communications plans and track stakeholder concerns and requests. Every engagement opportunity will be documented by engagement type, stakeholder category, relevance and specific input provided. The team will detail

how that input has been communicated and integrated into the overall planning of the Project. This will improve transparency and illustrate the variety of engagement strategies planned. This information will be included in the semi-annual progress reports, which are a BOEM lease condition, and will be posted on the Project website. Reports will note when and how each concern has been addressed or integrated into the design, development, or operation of the project.

6 Collaborative Opportunities

A major focus of the Plan is to engage fishing communities in the development of collaborative opportunities for monitoring and research, as well as safety and training enhancements, that are informed by their local knowledge of historic and current fishing activities and resources. The objective is a robust research, monitoring, enhancement, and data sharing program that addresses relevant needs identified by fishing community stakeholders, state and federal agencies, and other partners. Coordination with other developers will be explored whenever feasible to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of these efforts.

6.1 Monitoring

Pre-, during, and post-construction monitoring is an important component of avoiding and addressing fisheries impacts, providing for the continuity of existing data streams, and piloting the application of new technologies and survey designs. Community Offshore Wind envisions a collaborative monitoring program that is adaptive to fisheries management, stakeholder, and Project needs, and provides opportunities for coordination across leaseholders. The following is a non-exhaustive list of potential collaborative monitoring initiatives:

- Provide opportunities for commercial and for-hire vessels to participate in pre- and post-construction resource, mapping, and benthic surveys.
- Piloting integration/transition from NOAA vessels to industry vessels in fishery independent survey areas impacted by turbine construction.
- Development and testing of consistent monitoring methods and survey designs in coordination with other leaseholders to facilitate integration with long-term resource surveys.
- Join ROSA Advisory Council, pending membership approval, and participate in the organization's efforts to advance collaborative and consistent regional approaches to monitoring.
- Support and participate in the development of the American Clean Power Recreational Fisheries Engagement initiative, and explore opportunities for recreational participation in innovative monitoring approaches.
- Support for socio-economic monitoring of fishing communities to document Project impacts and benefits.

6.2 Research

State and federal agencies, regional fishery management bodies, and other partners have contributed significant resources to identifying research needs regarding impacts of offshore wind development on fisheries resources and management. Community Offshore Wind is committed to active participation and coordination with other leaseholders in addressing and supporting these needs, recognizing the strain that rapid expansion of offshore wind has placed on the region's research community. The following is a non-exhaustive list of potential opportunities that will be expanded as the Project's fisheries communications team engages in existing conversations on development of research needs:

- Engagement with academic institutions and research collaboratives (e.g., VIMS, Rutgers, SMAST, CFF, State University of New York (SUNY), Science Center for Marine Fisheries (SCMFIS), etc.) regarding research needs for fisheries occurring in the Lease Area.
- Explore potential sponsorship/support opportunities for workshops and research activities focused on scallop and/or surf clam resources.
- Coordinate with regional fishery management councils, NMFS, ROSA, RWSC, and academic partners to identify and develop collaborative research projects for affected species that are suitable for commercial and headboat platforms.
- Provide support for exploratory research to improve compatibility and/or efficiency of dredge gear within offshore wind arrays.
- Support research to address potential impacts of wind energy areas on federal surveys and resource assessments (e.g., collaborate on relevant resource assessment modeling efforts, potential calibration of various survey techniques, etc.)
- Support habitat research relevant to species occurring within lease area.
- Explore potential research opportunities for private anglers through the American Clean Power Association's Recreational Fisheries Engagement initiative.
- Support for internship opportunities.

6.3 Information and Data Sharing

A tremendous amount of data and information will be generated during site characterization and assessment, construction and post-construction monitoring, and collaborative opportunities described above. The project is committed to providing timely access to fisheries data and information to the extent practicable to improve management of ocean resources. Anticipated activities to support this objective include:

- Explore utility of project data to ecosystem and other resource assessments.
- Collaborate with researchers and/or educators to distill research and monitoring results into formats suitable for general public audiences (e.g., ArcGIS Story Maps) and students.
- Provide public access to research and monitoring data within the bounds of federal confidentiality requirements necessary to protect individual fishing entities.
- Develop a data sharing/confidentiality policy that clearly outlines the Project's expectations of contracted entities (e.g., academic researchers) with respect to pre-, during, and post-construction data collection funded by the Project.

6.4 Safety and Training

Safety of fishermen, communities, and Project crews is a core principle of the Plan that is aligned with the overall philosophy of avoidance of fisheries impacts whenever possible. The Project is committed to promoting the safe and sustainable coexistence of fishing activities and offshore wind through initiatives such as:

- Engage local fishermen to serve as scout vessels during survey operations and as guard vessels during project construction.
- Incorporate the ability for fishermen to provide real-time updates regarding changes in fishing operations via innovative digital approaches (see Section 4. 2).
- Provide marine simulator training for commercial and recreational vessels to experience navigation through different potential project design configurations under a variety of weather conditions.

- Support the American Clean Power Association's Recreational Fishing Industry Engagement initiative as a venue to identify and address the unique safety concerns of for-hire and private anglers.
- Provide support for vessel radar upgrades and/or testing of new equipment for commercial and for-hire fishing vessels.
- Collaborate with NOAA, the USCG, and chart plotting companies to develop an efficient process for providing updated chart information at appropriate timeframes, based on site assessment activities and continuing throughout project construction and operation.

7 Conflict Prevention and Resolution

The philosophy of Community Offshore Wind is that integration of curated, local fisheries knowledge into the Project design will prevent conflicts by avoiding fisheries impacts to the greatest extent practicable. The intent of the FCP is for Liaisons to work with FRs and fishing communities to develop this knowledge, collaboratively identify potential impacts from the Project, and where those impacts cannot be avoided, engage in a bottom-up process to develop approaches to minimize, rehabilitate, and mitigate those impacts. Approaches to prevent conflicts that might arise include but are not limited to the following:

- Engage fishing communities early in discussions of options for export and inter-array cable layouts, as well as installation/burial techniques, that minimize impacts to fishing activities and habitats.
- Coordinate with fishing communities and adjacent developers to identify options that could avoid or reduce impacts on fishing activities.
- Engage fishing communities to develop seasonal and geographic awareness of fisheries operations so they can be considered in the scheduling of site assessment and construction activities.

Our fisheries team will focus on constructive, proactive engagement with the fishing industry in order to avoid and minimize project conflicts with marine fisheries. In recognition that it may not be possible to avoid all conflicts, the Project will implement a stepwise approach to address disputes. This process will begin with the fisheries team working to address differences within a reasonable timeframe (e.g., 30 days), followed by an intermediate step allowing for external consultations as needed, and a final step of engaging of a professional facilitator to assist in the identification of potential solutions or resolutions. The intent is to provide members of the fishing community a clear process to address disagreements, as well as opportunities to notify the Project of previously unknown conflicts and concerns via multiple tools (e.g., website, mobile app, contact with FRs and Liaisons), and suggestions for resolution. We are committed to successful, long-term coexistence with the fisheries, and will be proactive in our efforts to identify and work through any potential conflicts.

8 Coordination Across Leases

Coordination with other developers is a theme that is integrated throughout the Plan, and the Project is committed to advancing these efforts. Project leadership currently participates in the American Clean Power Fisheries Subcommittee, as well as the NYSERDA F-TWG and E-TWG to collaborate on issues of common interest among leaseholders, including:

- Collaborating with other leaseholders to develop consistent monitoring practices that are informed by state and federal resource needs, and fisheries stakeholder concerns.

- Development of consistent protocols for compensation for gear loss and damage as well as potential lost fishing income.
- Coordinated stakeholder engagement efforts (e.g., joint topic workshops, port hours, curating local knowledge, identifying communication preferences and opportunities to improve communications efficiency and reduce the burden on fishermen, etc.)
- Agency communication and engagement.

9 Indicators and Metrics

This plan will include specific metrics and indicators to measure the success and efficacy of the Plan. The team will collaborate with stakeholders to seek early feedback on candidate qualitative and quantitative metrics. Once defined these performance metrics will be described in future versions of the Plan and updates included in progress reports. This is an important step in identifying clear ways to evaluate and continuously improve the Plan. Some candidate metrics include:

- Target meeting frequencies for state and federal agencies and their offshore wind working groups, as well as fisheries management entities, to convey updates on project status and solicit feedback.
- Number of interviews with participants and representatives of various fisheries sectors.
- Number of open houses and/or port meetings hosted (in-person and virtual) to develop collaborative research and monitoring opportunities.
- Achievement of team development goals (e.g., number of FRs representing different fisheries and sectors)
- Number of fishery and/or sector specific fact sheets developed.

Appendix 1 – Fisheries Team Contact Information

Name/Contact Information	Title
Deirdre Boelke (Primary Contact) RWE Renewables Americas, LLC 100 Federal St. Boston, MA 02110 DeirdreB@communityoffshorewind.com Cell: 978-518-0638	Fisheries Liaison
Michelle Duval Mellivora Consulting 841 Parkside Ave West Chester, PA 19382 MichelleD@communityoffshorewind.com Cell: 919-601-3798	Fisheries Liaison
Rick Robins RWE Renewables Americas, LLC 100 Federal St. Boston, MA 02110 RickR@communityoffshorewind.com Cell: 757-876-3778	Marine Affairs Manager

Appendix 2 – Example Engagement Tracking Template

The following is an example of a potential stakeholder engagement tracking template and the types of information the fisheries team anticipates collecting to describe and document how input from fisheries participants and stakeholders is being integrated into the Project, and how feedback is being provided. As noted in Section 5.5, a Project-wide stakeholder management system is being developed to comprehensively track all stakeholder input and feedback mechanisms across all required Project communications plans.

Date of Engagement	Engagement Type	Fisheries Team member(s)	Stakeholder Category	Stakeholder Name(s)	Organization (if applicable)	Location	Phone	Email	Summary of Issues Discussed	Project-Specific Input Provided	Actions in Response to Feedback

Appendix 3 – Gear Loss Claim Form



Fishing Gear Avoidance and Claims Process

Community Offshore Wind, LLC and our contractors are committed to avoiding interactions with commercial fishing gear. Our fisheries team—including our Fisheries Liaisons in coordination with our Fisheries Technical Advisors/Fisheries Representatives—conduct risk assessments in consultation with the local fishing industry to assess the spatial and seasonal distribution of fixed fishing gear in the project area. Effective communication and close coordination are key to avoiding negative fisheries interactions and our team is committed to proactive communication through fisheries notices, notices to mariners, and direct outreach to local fishermen to notify the fleet of the project’s offshore operations. Our survey operations also use onboard fisheries liaisons and scout vessels, as indicated by the risk assessments, in order to reduce the risk of interacting with fixed fishing gear.

In the event of an interaction with commercial fishing gear, Community Offshore Wind, LLC has a gear loss claims procedure in place to provide a process for fishermen to file a claim for their gear damage or loss.

Claim Filing Process

If a fisherman believes or has information that they experienced gear damage or loss as a result of Community Offshore Wind’s operations, they should review and complete the Gear Loss Claim Application, together with the appropriate supporting documentation.

The completed application and supporting documentation must be submitted by email to our Fisheries Liaison, DeirdreB@communityoffshorewind.com with an electronic copy to our Marine Affairs Manager at RickR@communityoffshorewind.com.

To have a claim reviewed, applicants must:

1. Contact Deirdre Boelke, Fisheries Liaison, as soon as safely possible following the gear damage or loss event. She should be contacted by phone at 978.518.0638. If she is unavailable by phone, contact Rick Robins, Marine Affairs Manager, at 757.876.3778.
2. Provide a complete, signed application form and supporting documents within 30 days of the gear damage or loss incident.
3. Review and include all documents required in the application Check List.

Process for claim review:

- Gear damage or loss claim applications will be reviewed by the Community Offshore Wind Fisheries Liaison and a representative of Community Offshore Wind.

- Applicants will be notified of the result of the review, in writing, within 30 days of receipt of a complete application.
- If the claim is found to be valid, a check will be provided to the Applicant.
- If the claim is denied, a written explanation will be provided to the Applicant.
- Applicants who disagree with the decision may file a written notice of appeal with Community Offshore Wind, LLC, and Community Offshore Wind, LLC may engage or consult with a third party or external reviewers to review the application on appeal. The decision on appeal will be final and not subject to any further right of appeal.
- Applicants may not file multiple claims for gear loss in the same area. Prevention methods should be followed by all parties.
- Community Offshore Wind, LLC reserves the right to request additional information to support review of claim.

Gear Loss Claim Application Form

Date of application: _____

Name of applicant: _____

Entity type: (LLC, corporation, individual proprietor) _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Vessel name: _____

Home port: _____

Vessel documentation number: _____

Federal fishing permit number: _____

State fisheries landing permit: _____

Gear type: _____

Description of incident causing gear damage or loss, and extent of the gear damage or loss, believed attributable to offshore operations associated with the project:

Date of gear loss incident (specify actual/observed or estimated): _____

Time of day and weather conditions (if known): _____

Location of gear damage or loss (lat/lon or TDs—specify): _____

Spatial record of gear damage location (chart plotter, logbook, other—specify, and please provide image, copy):

Gear description and markings: _____

Description of offshore wind vessels and any other vessels in area of gear damage/loss (specify source—observation, AIS, etc.) :

When was gear last set or hauled: _____

Was any gear retrieved, how much, and condition: _____

How much gear (pots, traps, high flyers, etc.) was damaged or lost in this specific incident?

Claim amount requested for damaged or lost gear: _____

Provide detailed invoice for original gear, if available, and invoice for gear repair or replacement.

Provide completed W-9 form (<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>).

Provide any available photos of undamaged and damaged gear.

Additional documentation is required if Applicant is claiming lost fishing time and this section only needs to be completed if Applicant is claiming lost fishing time:

Date of gear damage/loss: _____

Date of gear repair/replacement: _____

Amount of claim for lost fishing time: _____

Description of lost fishing time and revenue: _____

Description of fish landing history for the 30-day period prior to gear damage/loss, and vessel trip report (VTR) records or state landing records if fishery is not subject to VTR requirements:

Provide documentation of gear tag replacement application/receipt, state and federal if applicable.

By submitting this Application, Applicant authorizes Community Offshore Wind, LLC to make whatever reasonable inquiries and investigations it deems necessary to verify my application and request for compensation.

Applicant understands that submitting this Application does not guaranty payment. Applicant further acknowledges and agrees that if this claim is accepted and paid in its entirety, that acceptance of such payment constitutes full, final, and complete payment for this particular claim and that neither Community Offshore Wind, LLC nor any of its affiliates shall have any further outstanding or ongoing obligation with respect to this specific claim and Applicant shall not, directly or indirectly, assert any claim, or commence, join in, prosecute, participate in, or fund any part of, any suit or other proceeding of any kind against Community Offshore Wind, LLC or its affiliates, based upon this specific claim. If a claim is denied in part, Applicant may accept payment for the undisputed part without waiving Applicant's right to appeal the disputed part of the claim. Applicant recognizes that submission of this Application does not affect Applicant's rights concerning matters other than those specifically identified in this specific Application.

I attest, under penalty of perjury, that to the best of my knowledge the information in this Application is true and correct.

Signature _____

Date _____

Application Check-list

- Completed and signed application
 - Completed and signed W-9 form
 - Image or copy of documentation (chart plotter, logbook, etc.) of location of gear damage incident
 - Provide any available photos of undamaged and damaged gear
 - Invoices for original gear and replacement gear
 - Any additional information Applicant wishes to have considered in support of application
-

Additional information required for any claims of lost fishing time

- VTRs and state landings reports, as appropriate to the fishery, for the 30-day period prior to the incident
- Documentation of tag replacement applications and receipts, if applicable

Our fisheries liaisons are here to help—please let the liaison know if you have any questions and please return this form and attachments by delivering an electronic copy via email to Deirdre Boelke, Fisheries Liaison for Community Offshore Wind, LLC at DeirdreB@communityoffshorewind.com, with a copy to Rick Robins, Marine Affairs Manager, at RickR@communityoffshorewind.com.

Please note that the payment cannot be processed without a signature and completed W-9 form. If applications are deemed to be incomplete, they will be returned to the applicant within 15 business days to complete the application.