

July 22, 2016

Betsy Nicholson, NE RPB Federal Co-lead
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Regional Office
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2276

Dear Ms. Nicholson,

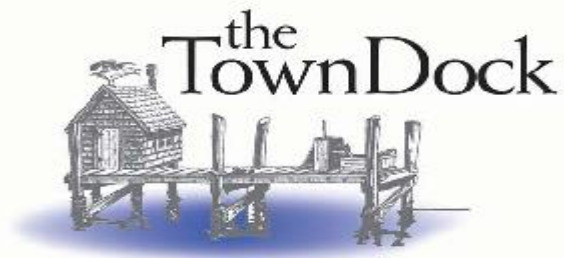
Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Northeast Ocean Plan. The Town Dock appreciates the goal of this Plan, which is to be able to manage the ocean as a whole and to consider all stakeholders' needs and concerns when determining where and when new projects will be taking place.

We also want to thank you for taking the industry's advice to map out both tow speed and transit information in the fishing data portal as it's an important distinction.

As you might now, we in the squid fleet do not feel that BOEM, who currently has plans for developing a windfarm in the NY Call WEA, is seriously taking our concerns into consideration while they continue to move forward with this project. Perhaps if a plan like this would have been in effect when BOEM started this process we wouldn't be facing the possibility of losing an important and reliable fishing ground due to the construction of this wind farm.

Along these lines, there is one question that we do have when it comes to the potential projects and the fishing industry. If it's found that a project will conflict with the fishing industry, how and who is it that determines if a project is approved? How is it determined which stakeholder's needs or wants carries more weight?

While reading through this plan, I see that you are striving to have an open and transparent process and that you plan to hold yearly informational meetings. We ask that when holding these meetings you hold several of them up and down the coast so as many people can attend as a possible. The meeting schedule should be available to the public well ahead of time to make sure they can make these meetings.



During these meetings I hope that you will be asking the public for any data changes or updates that they would like to see incorporated into the portal.

Regarding the Important Ecological Area (IEA) Framework, we have some concerns. First, we understand that a healthy ecosystem keeps species thriving which in turn is good for our business; however we are very concerned about the possibility of losing fishing grounds. As you might know, there are several wind projects in New England and the Mid-Atlantic being planned: two off of Long Island and a major leased area south of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. In the back of some of our minds is the fact that the moratorium for drilling on Georges Bank expires in 2022.

With the threat of being squeezed out of these areas and what the unknown effects windfarms might have on the species and habitat we rely on, we are extremely nervous about the possibility of losing vital fishing grounds. We ask that when discussing IEA's that you include everyone in these discussions, again with ample time and notice of these meetings.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Katie Almeida
Fishery Policy Analyst