MARCO Stakeholder Liaison Committee Meeting

An opportunity for reflection on the regional planning process

November 20, 2015

Introduction

This document provides an overview of key points from the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO) Stakeholder Liaison Committee meeting on November 20, 2015 in Annapolis, Maryland. It captures information from discussions regarding stakeholder feedback and comments regarding the regional ocean planning process and specific comments on draft interjurisdictional coordination (IJC) actions. It is organized to provide an overview of roles of meeting participants and describe discussion around the draft IJC actions and more general comments about the regional ocean planning process. This document was developed by Meridian Institute, which facilitated the meeting.

Meeting participants

An asterisk (*) denotes remote participation.

Name	Affiliation	Role in the Mid-Atlantic ocean planning process
Stakeholder Liaison Committee Members and Alternates		
Fatima Ahmad	American Wind Energy Association (AWEA)	Represent the offshore wind industry
Donnie Brown	Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA)	Represents the cruise line industry
Sarah Chasis*	NRDC	Represents the environmental conservation community
Alison Chase*	NRDC	Represents the environmental conservation community
Jeff Deem	Recreational Fisherman	Represents the recreational fishing community
Matt Gove*	Surfrider Foundation	Represents the ocean recreation community
Bob Wargo*	North American Submarine Cable Association	Represents the submarine cables industry
Sean Kline	Chamber of Shipping of	Represents the shipping industry

	America	
Scott Whitehurst	The Port of Virginia	Represents the ports community
Additional Meeting Participants		
Dustin Antonello*		Public Participant
Mary Boatman*	Bureau of Ocean Energy Management	RPB Data Synthesis workgroup co-chair
Gwynn Crichton*	The Nature Conservancy	Public Participant; MARCO Portal Team
Kevin Chu	NOAA/National Marine Fisheries Service	RPB Member
Sarah Cooksey	Delaware Coastal Programs	MARCO Management Board member, RPB ROA workgroup co-chair
Greg DiDomenico	Garden State Seafood Association	Public Participant
Brent Greenfield*	National Ocean Policy Coalition	Public Participant
Kevin Hassell	New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection	RPB member staff
Anne Hawkins	Fisheries Survival Fund	Public Participant
Kimberly Hernandez	Maryland Department of Natural Resources	RPB member staff
Walter Johnson*		Public Participant
Michael Luisi	MAFMC and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources	RPB Member
Kris Lynch*		Public Participant
Tony MacDonald	Monmouth University Urban Coast Institute	MARCO Data Portal lead
Laura McKay	Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program	MARCO chair; RPB Data Synthesis workgroup co-chair
Jaclyn Murray*		Public Participant
Andy Radford*		Public Participant
Nicole Rodi	Delaware Coastal Programs	RPB member staff
Gwynne Schultz	Maryland Department of Natural Resources	MARCO Management Board member; RPB State Co-lead
Liz Semple	New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection	MARCO Management Board member
Doug Simpson	U.S. Coast Guard	RPB Member
Michael Snyder*	New York Department of State	MARCO Management Board, RPB Member
Staff and Advisors		
Kaity Goldsmith	MARCO	MARCO staff
Arlo Hemphill	MARCO	MARCO staff

Ingrid Irigoyen	Meridian Institute	RPB facilitation
Michelle Lennox	MARCO	MARCO staff
Meghan Massaua	Meridian Institute	RPB facilitation
Kate Morrison	MARCO	MARCO staff
Lucas Smith	Meridian Institute	RPB facilitation

Comments on the proposed interjurisdictional coordination actions

After initial welcoming remarks, participants reviewed the *Mid-Atlantic RPB Draft Interjurisdictional Coordination Actions*. IJC action champions shared updates with members of the SLC, and solicited feedback and questions. Key participant comments and questions about the draft IJC actions are identified below. While an opportunity was provided for participants to comment on each IJC action, some actions received no comments. Below are the main highlights from that discussion.

Tribal Uses

- Support was expressed for the action to convene informal meetings between federal agency officials and tribal representatives to facilitate consultation and build relationships.

Healthy Ocean Ecosystems

- Participants expressed interest in the indicators that were under development and how many and which ones might be included in the final Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan (OAP).
- Concern was expressed that the concept of "ecologically-rich areas" might be challenging to interpret in the current regulatory framework for fishery management. Specifically, the use of the terminology "making recommendations" was questioned and additional clarification requested, particularly with regard to the appropriate role of the RPB in providing information to inform existing decision making processes versus developing policy recommendations.
- Some participants suggested that the regional ocean planning process should not only identify ecologically rich areas, but also protect them as much as possible under existing authorities.

Offshore Wind

- A participant expressed appreciation for a recent briefing given to the AWEA Offshore Wind Committee (via conference call in October 2015) as well as a breakfast meeting on regional ocean planning co-hosted by MARCO and Northeast Regional Ocean Council (September 2015). In particular, enthusiasm was expressed about the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal and its applicability to industry data needs.

Marine Navigation and Commerce

- Participants expressed support for ongoing discussion on AIS data in the Portal and in making more recent AIS data available. Engagement between the RPB working group and the Portal team resulted in a change to how the density of AIS data is displayed, allowing users to view vessel transits and understand how often vessels go through a specific area.
- The importance of additional stakeholder engagement, particularly with port authorities and associations, was emphasized.

Fisheries Science and Management

- SLC members expressed an interest in being involved as the fisheries-related IJC actions are pursued.
- A question was asked regarding considerations given to the consultation process under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act regarding Essential Fish Habitat.
- The intersection of regional planning and NOAA's ecosystem-based management efforts was discussed.

Stakeholder Engagement

MARCO has conducted a significant number of stakeholder engagement events, such as the *Tug and Barge Industry Roundtable*, staffing a booth at the *White Marlin Open*, attending the *AWEA Offshore WINDPOWER Conference*, sharing data with stakeholders, and conducting webinars to provide information and seek feedback. MARCO also highlighted upcoming events for stakeholder engagement, including the *North Atlantic Port Association* meeting, a December 8 RPB webinar, an open session on data synthesis with the fishing community at the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) meeting in Annapolis on December 9, an in-person presentation event on Ocean Assessment and Data Syntheses in Dewey Beach Delaware on January 29, and public comment at the RPB meeting that will be scheduled for March 2016. MARCO emphasized its ability to support members of the Stakeholder Liaison Committee in their efforts to conduct outreach in their communities by providing communication products or Portal demonstrations. Key takeaways of subsequent discussion were:

- Stakeholder engagement events provide an opportunity to engage key stakeholder communities and other members of the public in the regional ocean planning process.
- The Portal team is interested in leveraging pre-existing "How Tuesdays" outreach efforts to conduct more industry-specific Portal trainings.
- Cross-sectoral engagement is helpful, and in-person meetings are an important part of facilitating that engagement. A suggestion offered was for each SLC member to produce

a white paper describing their stakeholder community so that others on the committee would better understand each other's perspectives.

- Interest was expressed in fact-sheets or other short communication documents that could be distributed, possibly on an industry or topic specific basis, in particular to inform people during the draft OAP public comment period in summer 2016. Summary documents on key aspects of the OAP are desired as well.
- Interest in additional public listening sessions during the summer 2016 public comment period was also expressed and that some of these sessions should be held in the evenings to accommodate public participation.

Public Comments

At the end of the session, members of the public were invited to share input on the regional ocean planning process via webinar and in person. Key reflections from the public included:

- Concern was expressed regarding how the OAP might impact the fishing industry. Given the current regulatory environment, additional clarity regarding the role of the RPB and its authority is necessary. There were three main questions:
    - Will the RPB produce additional regulations or cause additional regulations to be made?
    - How will the OAP impact current Fishery Management Plans?
    - Who will judge whether fishing activities are appropriate?
- The need to recognize the particular importance of fishermen as stakeholders in the process was emphasized. The fishing community is a longtime, well established user of the ocean and small changes to policy can result in significant impacts to their ability to make a living.
- It was clarified that the RPB is not a regulatory authority.
- Further clarification regarding ERAs was requested, specifically regarding what criteria any ERA designations would be based on, and under what authorities they would be designated.
- Support was expressed for factoring in the potential of new offshore development, including conventional energy.
- Additional clarification was requested regarding the criteria for membership in the SLC.
- Support was expressed for an elongated comment period on the draft OAP (from 45 days to 90 days).
- A suggestion was made that any regional ocean planning activities continued beyond 2016 should fall under the purview of MARCO and the MAFMC.
- While it is important to provide data, stakeholders also wanted the RPB to take action by identifying solutions to problems and resolving conflicts.
- A reminder was provided on the language in the executive order describing agency responsibilities.