

DRAFT

OFFSHORE WIND REGIONAL COLLABORATIVE

WORK PLAN 2024

Work Group Leads:

- State co-leads: Kevin Hassell, NJDEP and Michael Snyder, NYDOS
- Federal co-leads: Marianne Randall, NOAA and Wright Frank, BOEM
- Support Coordination: Dr. Janet Reimer, MARCO Science Project Manager

Description:

There is extensive state and federal activity related to planning and siting offshore wind (OSW) in the Mid-Atlantic. It is recognized that the Biden Administration has made OSW a priority as part of their climate agenda, through Executive Order 14008, Sec 207 and the Ocean Climate Action Plan (OCAP, March 2023). An offshore wind energy-focused group will provide a forum for interested MACO members to share and receive information about meetings and decision points related to offshore wind in the Mid-Atlantic, identify potential collaborative activities as needed, and engage with interested ocean users from time to time.

Much of the work conducted by the OWRC will build on Section 2.4.2 in the 2016 Ocean Action Plan (“...facilitate greater collaboration around ocean energy issues in the Mid-Atlantic”) by creating a forum for regular inter-agency discussion around offshore wind development in the region. Additionally, the Collaboration’s work relates to Action 4 of the Ocean Energy chapter in the 2016 Ocean Action Plan: “...use the Data Portal to enhance access to data, environmental reports, and proposed offshore wind development activities.” More recently, OSW has been identified as an essential component of green energy that is needed to reduce the impacts of carbon emissions on the ocean and global climate. The Biden administration has required the provision of 30 gigawatts of OSW energy by 2023.

Through inter-agency coordination and community/ocean user engagement, Mid-Atlantic Offshore Wind Regional Collaborative (OWRC) seeks to identify regional data needs related to offshore wind and how to obtain those data, and compile information about best practices and identify issues that would benefit from closer collaboration that are not already being addressed by other offshore wind working groups in the region. In addition, the OWRC is committed to working with the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Planning Committee (Mid-A OPC), formally MACO, to support its commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Accessibility (DEIJA) and seeks to incorporate DEIJA objectives into all of its work.

Annually, the MARCO states and the OWRC will collectively decide on the priority activities to be accomplished each calendar year. The annual work plans will be informed by the results of the previous years' other activities, such as workshops, The Mid-A OPC Ocean Forum, community surveys, and other expressed needs of the states and other community users. All results of workplan related activities and community feedback will be incorporated into scope new and emerging offshore wind related issues in the Mid-Atlantic. This document was developed based on the responses to a survey of the full OWRC. The survey asked members to rank the five projects detailed in the MARCO Five-Year Work Plan of OWRC proposed activities. The activities were ranked by the OWRC based on relevance, regional collaboration, and redundancy to other agencies' initiatives and are listed in the document from highest priority to lowest priority..

Continued and New Activities

Activity 1: Information exchange between the states, Federal agencies, tribes, and the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Council (Years 1 through 5)

Activity 1.1 From 5-Year Work Plan: Regular quarterly meetings of the OWRC will continue to occur. Agendas for these meetings will be developed by MARCO staff and the work group leads and will include timely topics of relevance to the region.

- *This supports the exchange of information across agencies lines and encourages information sharing (Activity 1) and can act as workplan development meetings*
 - Deliverables/Outcome: Work plan for the following year
 - Other potential collaborations: OWRC only
 - Budget considerations: Time to support MARCO Staff
 - Metrics for this activity:
 - Number of attendees to the meeting
 - Number of “new” participants in meeting/work group

Activity 2: Engage with developers to understand data sharing needs and regional science needs

- **Context:** regional collaboration and public engagement are key workgroup focuses. OWRC provides the space to bring together agencies and developers to better understand and communicate regional concerns and how to work together to resolve data sharing and needs through observational data, including but not limited to water quality data (temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen, pH, turbidity, etc.), currents, and other met-ocean variables, as well as other parameters of interest as determined by the federal and state agencies. MARCO plays a key role in regional data collection and sharing. Determining what data is needed and by whom has always been a role that MARCO workgroups have played. Developers represent potential

sources of oceanographic data. Building on the relationships that will be established during the 2024 Transmission Siting Workshop, the OWRC will expand its connection to the OSW developer community. By engaging with developers, OWRC could provide important insights into data needs.

- *This supports the data sharing and would be a new activity for the workgroup. This activity, however, builds on the work of the RWSC by determining what information is needed post-construction.*
- *This activity also builds on the relationships between OWRC and developers that will be established during the 2024 Transmission Siting Workshop (Activity 2)*
 - Deliverables/Outcome: datasets, data layers for the portal
 - Other potential collaborations: developers, state and federal agencies, RWSC, MARACOOS, ROSA
 - Budget considerations: Time to support MARCO Staff
 - Metrics for this activity:
 - Number of developers to share data
 - Number of data sets shared

Activity 3: Continue to update the Planned Ports Data Layer for the Portal

- **Context:** The OWRC helped to compile information on the planned and existing ports related to OSW construction and maintenance. This layer presently appears on the Portal. The OWRC will continue to monitor new ports and add them to the existing Portal layer as information becomes available.
 - Deliverables/Outcome: Data layer for Portal, information sharing with stakeholders
 - Other potential collaborations: OSW Developers
 - Budget considerations: none
 - Metrics for this activity:
 - Number of visits to data portal layer

Activity 4: Outreach/engagement - Host several annual webinars open to the public on relevant topics related to OSW

- **Context:** Public perception and understanding of OSW is essential for combating misinformation. Webinars aimed at the general public can provide accurate and sound information within the context of targeted communities. Each of the states in the Mid-Atlantic will have different priority topics based on impacts to human communities. These webinars could also act as public listening sessions with an opportunity to have experts answer questions and are intended as information sharing, providing clarification, and helping the public be better informed. Surveying attendees before and after the session could provide a measure of their initial perception and the perception after they have listened to the session. Additional webinars/listening sessions could be aimed at tribes and will be addressed by the MARCO

tribal consultant under their scope of work. Participation in the Mid-A OPC Ocean Forum will be included in this activity.

- ***This supports the exchange of information across agencies lines and encourages information sharing (Activity 1) as well as addresses public education (Activity 2)***
 - Deliverables/Outcome: information on public perception and provide public with updated information, with recorded webinars and slides available online
 - Other potential collaborations: local and state agencies, community-based organizations, eNGOs
 - Budget considerations: Time to support MARCO Staff
 - Metrics for this activity:
 - Number of attendees to the webinars
 - Number of downloads/views of webinar recordings
 - Number of “new” participants at webinar

Activity 5: Understand and identify workforce development and educational opportunities

- **Context:** With new technology comes expanded job and educational opportunities. As the OSW industry grows, it is essential that the educational opportunities grow as well and are available to all communities. This activity will also support federal (and other) notices of funding opportunities that will support workforce development.
 - *Which colleges and universities in the Mid-Atlantic offer related majors, tech degrees, certifications, and continuing education?*
 - *Are educational opportunities being made available to underrepresented groups?*
 - *OWRC will play a role in promoting these programs/opportunities to underrepresented communities through online resources (The Portal, MARCO Websites, virtual open houses for undergraduate and graduate programs)*
- ***This addresses and builds on the current work on the availability and distribution of benefits by specifically looking at the equitable availability of jobs and training opportunities (Activity 3)***
 - Deliverables/Outcome: List and links of educational programs in the region posted on MARCO website (updated over time)
 - Other potential collaborations: RWSC, OSW Developers, industry organizations, educational institutions
 - Budget considerations: Time to support MARCO Staff
 - Metrics for this activity:
 - Number of site visits to the webpage
 - Number of programs that are listed on the webpage

Activity 6: Scope potential projects for external contractor in year 2025. Scoping in 2024 includes determining what projects (topics) will be of interest to the group and outlining the goals and objectives of obtaining such information.

- **Context:** Timely topics arise based on new research, federal policies, processes for permits and leases, and industry developments. Due to the ever changing nature of OSW, it is crucial for the OWRC to be ready to respond to information request needs in a timely manner. Funding for external contractors allows for the OWRC to add to its capacity on an as needed basis. The OWRC has recently discussed topics such as bidding credits and supply chains as potential areas where more information will need to be gathered. External contractors will be needed to advance specific information gathering.
 - Attendees of the 2024 Transmission Siting Workshop will be asked to contribute to the identification of potential project topics. There will be specific prompts for discussion at networking breaks and lunch.
- ***This addresses and builds on the current work on identifying timely topics and contributing to information availability on The Portal.***
 - Deliverables/Outcome: project identification for RFQ in 2025
 - Other potential collaborations: RWSC, OSW Developers, industry organizations, educational institutions, other partners and attendees of workshops.
 - Budget considerations: Time to support MARCO Staff
 - Metrics for this activity:
 - Number of topics suggested