

Island Ad-Vantages

THE VIEW FROM ATLANTIC AVENUE

January 7, 2021 – In mid-December the Governor’s Office of Energy here in Maine hosted a series of webinars to talk about plans to establish an Offshore Energy Research Array that would involve the placement of up to 20 commercial-scale floating wind turbines somewhere off the coast of Maine. These webinars are a part of the outreach plan that the Office of Energy and the Maine Department of Marine Resources is implementing to hear from fishermen about their thoughts and concerns regarding the establishment of the research array. The government agencies involved will apply to the Federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) for exclusive access to an area roughly 16 square miles. They are on an aggressive timeline hoping to submit their application later this spring in hopes of establishing a research program that will inform the future development of commercial-scale off shore wind energy in the Gulf of Maine. During the webinar, we learned that they are targeting an area off of southern Maine where there are better options for connecting to the electrical grid. More specifically, they are focusing on an area 20-40 miles off the mouth of the Sheepscot River. The presentation described the proposed floating turbine design that has been developed by the University of Maine and now being built by a partnership called Maine Aquaventis. The presentation did not describe the connection point to the grid, nor was it clear where the cable that makes that connection would be located and how that cable will be deployed. These, and similar questions dominated the conversation during the four 90-minute webinar session. The state plans on holding more meetings with fishermen in January either individually or in small groups.

The two sessions that I attended had about 65 participants including several fishermen. The fishermen brought up a wide range of questions and concerns about the impact on fishing in the research array, and also concerns about the cable route. The floating turbine design that is being proposed for this research array is identical to the one that will be installed as a test turbine off Monhegan Island in the next couple of years.

Do you have a question about our fisheries? Send it to info@coastalfisheries.org or call 207.367.2708. Learn more about MCCF by visiting us online at www.coastalfisheries.org.

FISHERIES LOG

Prices to Harvesters in Stonington

Scallops: \$12/lb.

Lobsters (run): \$4.20/lb.

Bait (herring): \$82/bu.

Fuel (diesel): \$2.25/gal.