

Via email

To: Kiera Walsh, Project Manager, Net Zero Atlantic

August 6, 2024

Thank you for your July 25, 2024, email requesting information on the constraints and setbacks the Committee has identified so far in the Regional Assessment for Offshore Wind Development in Newfoundland and Labrador (the Regional Assessment) process. We have provided answers to your questions below, with reference to our [Interim Report](#) (published March 2024).

Q: It seems the buffers associated with coastal areas (10km), Gros Morne [National Park] (80km), bird colonies (5km), lobster fishing areas (3km), ferry routes (500m around), marine transportation routes (10km) are solidified. Could you confirm these setback distances?

The buffers and setbacks described in the Interim Report are not necessarily solidified. The Interim Report was preliminary. Since the publication of the Interim Report, the Committee has continued to engage with Indigenous peoples, fishers and other ocean users, government agencies, environmental organizations, research groups, industry stakeholders, and the public. The information, analysis, and recommendations provided in the Interim Report are being refined and revised in the Regional Assessment Report based on that engagement. The Draft Regional Assessment Report will be published on October 1, 2024, for a 60-day public comment period. The Final Regional Assessment Report will be submitted to the Ministers no later than January 23, 2025. We invite you to review those reports for buffer and setback recommendations.

Additionally, it is important to note that the Committee makes recommendations to governments and regulators, who then decide whether and how to act on those recommendations (including determining and implementing any setback distances).

Q: Has the Committee considered implementing a setback distance for:

The Interim Report describes if and how the Committee considered setback distances for the various constraints applied when identifying preliminary offshore wind areas. Section references are provided (refer to the “Committee Approach” subsections in particular).

- **Shipwrecks and other archaeological sites** – Section 3.2.2.14 Physical and Cultural Heritage
- **Blue Whale Important Areas** – Section 3.2.2.7 Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas
- **Aquaculture sites, other fishing areas** – Section 3.2.2.8 Marine Refuges and Fisheries Closures, Section 3.2.2.13 Aquaculture, Section 3.2.2.12 Areas Important to Commercial Fisheries, Section 3.2.2.15 Areas Important for Indigenous Use, Section 3.2.3.1 Using a Coastal Buffer
- **Critical Habitat for aquatic species at risk** - Section 3.2.2.1 Critical Habitat

- **Indigenous communities and reserves** – Section 3.2.2.3 National Marine Conservation Areas, Section 3.2.2.15 Areas Important for Indigenous Use, Section 3.2.3.1 Using a Coastal Buffer
- **Northern Bottlenose Whale areas** – Based on information received to date and available data, this species is not found within the Focus Area and has therefore not been considered.
- **Anything else related to marine traffic (traffic density)** – Section 3.2.2.10 Other Ocean Uses.
- **Marine Protected Areas** - Section 3.2.2.2. Marine Protected Areas
- **Vulnerable marine ecosystems** – Section 3.2.2.2. Marine Protected Areas, Section 3.2.2.3 National Marine Conservation Areas, Section 3.2.2.6 Key Biodiversity Areas, Section 3.2.2.7 Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas, Section 3.2.2.8 Marine Refuges and Fisheries Closures, Section 3.2.2.11 Significant Benthic Areas
- **Seabird colonies; Important Bird Areas** – Section 3.2.2.5 Areas for Important Avifauna, Section 3.2.3.1 Using a Coastal Buffer
- **Areas of Interest** - The Committee is unsure what is meant by “Areas of Interest.” Please refer to Section 3.2.2 which describes each constraint considered.

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Q: Are there any other key constraints the Committee is considering?

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Thank you for your interest in this Regional Assessment and we look forward to your continued participation.

Regards,

Shayne McDonald (Chair), Glenn Blackwood, Leslie Grattan, Brian Power, and Paul W. Saunders
Committee for the Regional Assessment of Offshore Wind Development in Newfoundland and Labrador