

Regional Assessment of Offshore Wind Development in Newfoundland and Labrador In-Person Public Engagement Sessions Summary, June 2024

Meeting Records

The Committee for the Regional Assessment of Offshore Wind Development in Newfoundland and Labrador (the Committee) conducted in-person public engagement sessions at six locations in June 2024: Burgeo, Stephenville, Port aux Basques, Corner Brook, Fortune, Marystown, and Harbour Breton. IAAC Communications team advertised these sessions in advance, on the registry, local radio stations, and social media (Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn). Emails were also sent out to the distribution list, containing the advertisements and invited them to circulate within their networks. The Committee held two sessions at each location – afternoon and evening. Discussions were held from 2:00 – 4:00 pm and 6:00 – 8:00 pm. At each session, the Committee delivered a presentation and paused for discussion on each topic presented. The Committee also circulated hand-outs with background information and prompting questions about the potential impacts of offshore wind on various components. Participants were invited to submit completed handouts in-person or following sessions via email. Session materials are available here: [Virtual Public Sessions Slides, June 2024](#)

The evening session at Corner Brook did not proceed due to lack of attendance.

Recurring Themes:

The following themes were mentioned by participants in multiple sessions.

- Need for offshore wind energy / Use of electricity produced?
- Equitable benefits for local communities and existing marine users. Several participants raised concerns that new employment for local communities would be limited to minimum-wage jobs and that spatial conflict with existing marine users would adversely impact the local economy.
- The importance of fisheries to the Island of Newfoundland’s economy and culture and the need to avoid any adverse impacts to fisheries.
- Feedback on the preliminary offshore wind licencing areas, including recommendations to increase the coastal buffer and to avoid fishing areas.
- Confusion around the Regional Assessment mandate/process.
- Concerns about the potential negative impacts of offshore wind development on various components.
- Concerns about the low turn-out to engagement sessions and whether communities are being meaningfully engaged.

Below is a summary of each session.

Burgeo June 3, 2024, 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm & 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm Meeting Summary

Attendees:

Committee – 4 members

Secretariat – 3 members

IAAC – 1 employee

Participants – 20 participants (13 afternoon, 7 evening)

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Summary of discussion:

Need for offshore wind development/Implementation

- Is there offshore wind energy in Canada already?
- How far away from the coast would offshore wind farms be?
- What are the determining factors for where offshore wind energy will be developed?
- What is the purpose of offshore wind development in NL? How will it benefit locals? When will offshore wind energy be established?

Communities and Economies

- The NCMA is a priority for Burgeo – how will it be considered in or affected by the RA? What are the potential conflicts?
- Marine space is crowded by various ocean users (aquaculture/fishing/protected areas) already, offshore wind development will aggravate that issue.
- What kind of employment opportunities will offshore wind development bring to Burgeo.

Viewscapes

- Concerns about offshore wind development being visible from shore and affecting the view.

Negative impacts on fisheries, fishers, fish, and fish habitat

- There are important lobster fisheries in the area that may be affected negatively by offshore wind development.
- The marine environment and species within it have been changing a lot in recent years (e.g., increase in halibut and red fish, shark sightings, some tuna sightings, seal sightings, increasing water temperatures, and lobster increasing and moving deeper, expecting cod will return).
- Ongoing research in the area includes ACAP Humber Arm
 - Committee asked if there were recommendation for mechanisms to gather more research on fish/fish habitat
 - NMCA, Qalipu First Nation (QFN) research

Aerofauna

- The marine environment and species within it have been changing a lot in recent years (e.g., seeing Canada geese here for the first time, increase in cormorants/shags, and seeing shags in places hadn't before, seeing different bird compositions overtime, tern and gannet sightings have decreased significantly).
- There is ongoing monitoring work in the area through: Coastal Communities Conservation Opportunities Initiative, Murre and Tern monitoring – Coastal Stewardship Agreement, Birds Canada, and public bird monitoring programs.
- Sandbanks Provincial Park has an inventory of birds, butterflies, and insects seen over the years.

Marine Mammals and Sea Turtles:

- Whale Watching Companies/ferries may have marine mammal and sea turtle sighting data that may be useful to the Committee.

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Federal / Provincial government mandates

- Confusion about why certain areas (Laurentian Channel) were excluded from licencing map.

**Stephenville, June 4, 2024, 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm & 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm
Meeting Summary**

Attendees:

Committee – 3 members

Secretariat – 3 members

IAAC – 1 employee

Participants – 19 participants (10 afternoon, 9 evening)

Summary of Discussion:

Need for OSW/Implementation

- If the purpose of offshore wind development in Newfoundland and Labrador is to produce hydrogen, it does not benefit the local communities.
- Concerns offshore wind energy is greenwashing. What are the motives for the Regional Assessment?
- Is there a calculation for how much damage offshore wind energy causes per KW hour? If so, is it comparable to other energy sources?
- Requests for cost/benefit analysis to be conducted.
- Concerns about cables and noise associated with offshore.
- Need to consider how the energy from offshore wind would get to shore, even if turbines are out past the coast.
- The energy grid in Newfoundland and Labrador can't handle energy from offshore wind - what/where is the energy from offshore wind going to go and be used for?
- Concern for cumulative effects.
- Why is offshore wind energy needed in Newfoundland and Labrador, we already have hydro, mines, oil, and gas?
 - Hydro already contributes ~90% of Newfoundland and Labrador's energy needs – already have green energy.
 - Doubts there is a business case for offshore wind energy in Newfoundland and Labrador – feels politically motivated.

Communities and Economy

- Participant commented that Port au Port has no interest in onshore or offshore wind.
- Community does not feel well informed enough about offshore wind development to engage meaningfully in a RA or potential future project level engagement.
- Concern that community won't have a social licence when projects begin development. Desire to have the opportunity to provide ongoing feedback throughout the offshore wind development process. Concerns that employment opportunities associated with offshore wind development will not benefit locals. Jobs created will require specialized skills not currently held in the community and only provide temporary work.
 - The existing fisheries provide more stable employment.

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- Job boom associated with offshore wind development could affect local housing prices and cost of living.
- Necessary infrastructure for influx of workers doesn't exist in Port au Port
- Participant expressed that the Committee needs to learn from people and industries who have already established offshore wind.
- Concerns about onshore wind projects on Port au Port peninsula.
- Need better profit sharing between industry and local communities.
- Concerns on compounding effects of onshore and offshore wind in the area. Concerns over recent offshore wind project cancellations in the EU due to costs.
- Concern that many QFN members live in Bay St. George, but because QFN overall is landless only local QFN members be consulted through Indigenous engagement.
- Concerns that offshore wind development will exploit rather than benefit local communities.
- Concerns offshore wind development could affect tourism industry if developed facing the Gulf of the St. Lawrence and Red Island.
- Expressed loss of trust between community members, government, and developers due to previous industry development.
- Concerns that onshore/offshore turbines slated to be developed in Port au Port would surround Bay St. George and Port au Port Bay.
- Concerns only municipal leaders will be engaged for project-level assessments. Public community members need to be consulted.
- Economic benefits don't outweigh potential negative impacts.
- Requested information be provided on what the potential effects offshore wind are (particularly negative effects) so that communities can compare and decide if they want oil rigs or wind/green energy?
- How was this session communicated?
 - Concerned about poor turn-out and that the community has not been properly engaged. Session advertisement should be improved.
 - People aren't educated or aware of what developments are being proposed.
 - Participant suggested contacting regional QFN bands as they have their own lines of communication and can reach out to their band members.
 - Participant suggested contacting Indian Head First Nation band so they can inform their members of future engagement.

Health

- Concerns about Health issues associated with offshore wind development and operation. Additional concern about pressure on local hospitals during construction and development of offshore wind energy.
 - Hospitals have seen recent cutbacks and won't be able to meet the needs of an increased temporary or permanent population.
- Disruption to bedrock caused by offshore wind development could damage potable water quality.
- Concerns that the operation sounds and vibrations can cause long term health effects.
- Extraction, refinement of, and final materials used to construct turbines are of concern for pollution and health.

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Viewscapes

- A buffer >10km would be needed to prevent offshore wind development from impeding Port au Port viewscapes.
 - Property values may be affected.

Negative impacts on fisheries, fishers, fish, and fish habitat

- Concerns that there were no fishers at this session despite the significant impact OSW could have on them.
- Concerns that crab fisheries were not included in coastal buffer for potential licencing areas.
- Can't have both Fisheries and offshore wind energy in the same region. The two industries are incompatible.
 - Marine mammals such as seals are now competing with fishers for the fish stock and may negatively affect the industry. Adding offshore wind energy to the mix will make matters worse.
 - Concern about loss of access to fishing area not just direct loss of fish potentially caused by offshore wind development.
- Revenue (as used in the potential licencing areas constraints) is not a good measure of value for fish and fisheries.
- Concerns about changing climate: Is climate change something the committee is considering? Have water level increases been measured?
- Concerns on impacts to protected species and species at risk.
- Concerns about top-down/bottom-up effects of impacts on wildlife. If one species moves or is impacted the whole environment/ecology could change.
- Turbines damage the earth and ocean through vibrations which could change the temperature of ocean currents and disturb fish mitigation.

Aerofauna

- What information has the Committee considered for aerofauna?
- Concerns that birds will collide with turbines – stationary or moving.
 - Participant commented that more birds are killed by vehicles than turbines – offshore wind development may not pose significant risk.
- Birds cannot be considered as a whole but need to be assessed within each area by species as they travel at different heights and for varying distances for foraging and migration.
- A broad discussion between participants and committee members about the adaptability of animals to anthropogenic structures and climate changes took place.
- Industry in Port au Port is too big and may affect rare and endangered bird, bat, and other animal species, as well as bird nesting areas and other impacts on wildlife.
- Concerns about impacts to migratory animals such as birds - Port au Port is the only island in the region and an important stop for many species on their journey.
- Specific concerns towards infrasound that may affect sea life and birds navigation systems. Participant felt that industry doesn't take responsibility for the noise they produce (infrasound sound specifically) and they don't want to see these impacts in Port au Port.

Marine mammals and sea turtles

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- Offshore wind farms can't be moved if whale migration routes or habitats change.
- How will low-frequency noise caused by offshore wind development affect whales? Buffers will not help in reducing the noise.
- Concerns about low-frequency impacts.
 - Noise would affect animals both within and outside the Focus Area (potentially in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence) due to the dispersion of underwater noise.
- Porpoises and sea turtles are present in the area.
 - Sea turtle presence seems to be increasing with rising temperatures.

The Regional Assessment Process

- Confusion between onshore wind development in the area and offshore wind development Regional Assessment.
- Icebergs should not have been used to exclude areas for consideration from the Study Area.
 - Icebergs have been seen in Stephenville – more iceberg data should be collected.
- What is the timeline for this Regional Assessment?
 - Concern timeline is too short.
- Participants noted that engaging with the Regional Assessment is challenging and frustrating due to the large study/focus area. Project-level engagement or specific details on what or where something was proposed to be built is a more accessible level of development for the public to comment on.
- Concerns that the poor turn-out and associated lack of public comment will be perceived as a lack of interest that will be carried forward to project level assessments.
- Is the information gathered for the Regional Assessment for government use?
- Is the Committee/Regional Assessment funded by industry or government?
- More engagement is needed
- Opposing these kinds of big industry developments (offshore wind, onshore wind, mines, etc.) is challenging and feels unjust/impossible from a citizen's perspective.

Port aux Basques, June 5, 2024, 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm & 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Meeting Summary

Attendees:

Committee – 3 members

Secretariat – 3 members

IAAC – 1 employee

Participants – 2 participants (1 afternoon, 1 evening)

Summary of discussion:

Need for OSW/Implementation

- Concerns about lack of transparency during construction.
- Participant asked about turbine height above sea level.
- Observations on ice conditions: Ice present in this area, but seeing less in the last few years. It comes down through St. Lawrence and through the Straits.
 - Pack ice is a real risk to windfarms in this area.

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- Technical questions/comments given background (commenting on geology type would need for offshore wind foundations).
- Concerns about grid network of potential farms coming to shore.
- Questions about water depth.
 - In EU, windfarms are all in shallow waters.
- Participant asked/raised concerns about rationale for the Regional Assessment.
- Why does the government want wind here? Appears to be no environmental motive for NL.
- Not convinced floating could be structurally sound here given wind strength.
 - Noted rough and rugged environment (seeing winds up to 250 km/h 20 years ago, high wave heights).
- Discussed icebergs staying east/not coming out strait.

Communities and Economy

- This industry shouldn't happen here. There is no domestic need, building it to export it at the cost of our environment and community is not acceptable.
- Representatives of government are not representing local views.
- Participant compared the impacts they'd expect from wind development to be similar to those of powerlines/corridors. Magnetic fields from high energy transmissions interfere with biology.
- In some ways windfarms could be more restrictive than the offshore oil industry.
 - More space, installation is a big job, cabling, ships, and streambeds
- May be some infrastructure present in the area to support offshore wind development construction and vessels.
- Influx of workers will need specialized training that locals don't have, workers will be coming from elsewhere – economic boost via jobs may not benefit locals.
 - If locals could get the specialized training they need, offshore wind development could benefit the community.
 - The Marine Institute could offer the training.
- Communities need incentive to bring people back/keep them in the area.
- There's no room in the port for more vessels/service.
- Discussion on possibility of manufacturing j-tubes and underwater modules in the area.
- Suggested getting a slot in the evening news and Port aux Basques Area Open Forum to improve in-person engagement.

Negative impacts on fisheries, fishers, fish, and fish habitat

- 10 km buffer covers lobster fishing areas in summer and fall but lobster can go deeper in spring and winter.
 - Lobsters also migrate north passing through some areas that are under consideration for potential licencing.
- Discussion about ocean ecology:
 - Overfishing reduced the cod stocks, but seals are destroying the cod fishery, reducing other fish stocks, and there aren't enough natural predators for seals.
 - Grey seals, harps, and hoods, harbor seals have always been here. Grey seals started on Sable Island and colonized different islands every year. There are seals in Codroy Valley.
 - What will happen as seals die/sink how will it change the ecology?

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- Species moved into conservation area and are protected.
- Eel grass is in the Cod River – green crab has moved in, will decimate the eel grass and destroy the spawning grounds for salmon.
- Noted seeing a lot of flushing (i.e., filters) at offshore wind farms in other jurisdictions.
- There are commercial fisheries for harvesters in Port aux Basques for groundfish that may be affected.
- There are lucrative fisheries in the area.
 - Concern about trying to replace a lucrative fishery with offshore wind energy then finding out the fisheries were better economically.
- Capelin roll at the beach out past Wreckhouse near St. Andrews.

Aerofauna

- Participant indicated species they'd observed:
 - Canada Geese in Codroy Valley – Grand Codroy River is one of their stops as they migrate.
 - Black Guillemots used to be common in the area but now they're mostly gone.
 - Turrs and Murres are present, never fail to get their quota.
 - Geese, gulls, terns, and bats are in the area.
 - Great blue herons seen in the river.
 - Flocks of gannets near Cape Ray, always lots of gannets in this area.
- Birds like turrs/murres will be migrating in wintertime and will be impacted. Canada Geese also migrate through the area.
- Duck hunting tourism in the area could be negatively impacted by OSW wind.
- Bird mortalities related to oil and gas are easier to identify and therefore, hold accountable than OSW associated bird mortalities.

Marine mammals and sea turtles

- Seeing a lot more seals, we do get whales, dolphins, porpoise (in the summer), occasionally see sunfish.
- Blue Shark - don't see them as much now because no one is fishing with fixed gear so they're not getting tangled in nets.
- Leatherbacks are common.

Corner Brook Sessions, June 6, 2024, 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm & 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Meeting Summary

Attendees:

Committee – 3 members

Secretariat – 3 members

IAAC – 1 employee

Participants – 5 participants (5 afternoon, 0 evening)

Summary of discussion:

Need for OSW/Use of electricity produced

- Offshore wind energy is more expensive to develop vs. onshore

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- Companies leasing onshore should be required to develop offshore as well – could better distribute impact on communities.

Communities and Economy

- Reacted positively to Committee’s recommendations to avoid NMCA and Gros Morne. Spoke about the geopark trying to get designated under UNESCO and potential compensation by offshore wind industry if there is a negative impact on the proposed park.
- Adjacent communities to any offshore wind development project should have some stake/economic benefit from the offshore wind farm.
- Offshore wind development could introduce employment opportunities to the community via supply vessels.
- Concern that most communities are engaged after an agreement or memorandum of understanding (MOU) is reached between provincial and federal authorities.
 - Committee should make recommendations that address MOU’s - particularly to address the Bays jurisdiction.
- Recommended engaging local operators for tourism industry (license holders for ferry, cruise ships, etc.).

Viewscapes

- Would the reflection of the sun on blades be an issue? Bottom Cove sunsets are important (west coast) and to a lesser extent McIver’s.

Negative impacts on fisheries, fishers, fish, and fish habitat

- What would the radius for non-fishing areas around these turbines be?
- Vessels less than 35 ft don’t carry Automatic Identification System (AIS) and if MOU goes through the Committee’s coastal buffer won’t work to protect fisheries.
- Is there an exclusion zone around offshore wind farms? Is it more common to see a corridor through the farm or generally are boats just expected to avoid it?
- Have you differentiated your analysis re: different phases (construction/installation, operation)?

Aerofauna

- Vertical shafts are being used in Norway instead of entire diameter to help minimize impacts to aerofauna.

Marine Mammals and Sea turtles

- Anecdotally, we’re seeing more dolphins, see some whales, never seen any mammals under the *Species at Risk Act* in the area, see sunfish and sharks sometimes.

Process of the Regional Assessment

- Suggested finding local advocates for social media and contacting local media in advance to plug session on order to improve turn-out.

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Fortune Sessions, June 10, 2024, 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm & 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Meeting Summary

Attendees:

Committee – 2 members

Secretariat – 2 members

Participants – 23 participants (8 afternoon, 15 evening)

Summary of discussion:

Communities and Economies

- Participants identified various adverse impacts to communities and economies including: an influx of temporary workers, concerns about increased cost of living and housing, and concerns that decommissioning and clean-up costs could be left on the community.
- Participants asked about expected wages for offshore wind jobs and training for specialized jobs. Participants expect and are concerned that locals would be sacrificing to provide lucrative skilled work for foreign workers, and that the same opportunities wouldn't be available to locals.
- Participants raised several points about marine transportation, vessels and vessel routes:
 - The Preliminary Licencing Areas the Committee presented miss some routes that should be avoided, such as the Placentia Bay, Eastern Seaboard route.
 - Offshore wind is a safety concern for shipping routes and vessels
 - Land-based turbines will also increase shipping. Has this cumulative impact been accounted for?

Fisheries, Fish and Fish Habitat

- Participants indicated the local workforce is predominately fisheries-based and that few non-fishing areas exist offshore Newfoundland.
- Participants indicated that fisheries displacement by another industry is unacceptable, and that restricted fishing access is a major concern. Participants asked about buffers/restriction zones around turbines and raised concerns about laid cables displacing scallop fisheries (i.e., draggers could not be used) and disrupting lobster grounds. Participants also asked whether leases could be time sensitive and/or returned to fishers after projects are decommissioned, and whether offshore wind development could coexist with aquaculture sites and avoid fisheries.
- Participants inquired about compensation packages and raised concerns. They noted examples including compensation systems in Denmark and other EU countries (e.g., the Fisheries Fund in the UK) and a local example where a power line was installed and displaced scallop fisheries were offered a compensation package. Participants raised concerns that if a developer sold their lease, a new proponent may not need to honour compensation packages. They also indicated that compensation packages should not be provided to the fisheries union, they should go to displaced fishers.
- Participants indicated that a St. Pierre fisher could sue Canada for loss of fisheries and wondered whether a fisher here could similarly sue the provincial or federal governments.
- Participants raised concerns about noise impacting fish, particularly in spawning areas and during breeding. They indicated noise from turbine installation would interfere with lobster breeding and would affect the food chain (e.g., impacts on crab and cod); noise makes fish take

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longer to grow, and noise is amplified underwater. Anything above 10 dB will disrupt fish; and that they previously observed adverse impacts of seismic studies on crab stocks.

- Participants raised concerns about impacts on salmon migration.
- Participants raised concerns about safety – could offshore wind impact navigation systems fishers use?
- Participants indicated and/or inquired about key fishing areas:
 - Every area from here to Port aux Basque has lobster fishers who would be impacted.
 - Fortune Bay (shown in orange on the map) is good crab ground and good grounds for other fish. That area should be removed from the Offshore Wind Licensing Areas
 - Asked about fisheries in Conne River and whether the Committee has met with the Chief.
- Participants indicated the Committee should use a larger coastal buffer to protect lobster because fisheries are changing. Waters are warmer and nearshore fisheries are already moving deeper. A 10 km buffer only protects lobster now.
- The Committee indicated part of the reason for the 10 km buffer (instead of 20 km) is because of a scarcity of shallow water offshore Newfoundland. Participants indicated that not having suitable enough area without compromising necessary protection indicates this area is not suitable for the industry.
- Participants commented on fisheries engagement in the Regional Assessment process:
 - FFAW won't provide the Committee information from us. Reach out to fishers directly about the Licencing Areas we're using.
 - Fishers identified areas they were using during the November meetings and these haven't been reflected in your Licencing Areas.
 - No one on the fisheries advisory group is from this community. How did this advisory group form? Is anyone on it from the Burin Peninsula?
- Participants indicated unfair treatment of developers vs. fishers. We need to put markers in our rope for marine mammals but drilling for monopiles would also impact marine mammals.
- Participants indicated the proposed NMCA area has a lucrative fishery and asked whether fishers would be permitted there.
- Participants raised concerns about fish habitat. They asked about the propensity for oil spills, indicated they've read turbines are making the water temperature cooler, and raised concerns about runoff into bays affecting spawning grounds.

Aerofauna

- Participants indicated seeing common murre and turrs fly through Fortune Bay and Hermitage Bay, and pelicans in the offshore area. Participants also indicated that stewardship programs in the area track birds.
- Participants raised concerns about impacts to birds and bats. They asked whether wind generated by offshore wind would affect birds/bats, indicated puffin populations are attracted to lights and get disoriented, and noted concerns about migratory routes and birds flying offshore being attracted to lights.

Marine Mammals and Sea Turtles

- Participants noted seeing marine mammals in Fortune Bay and asked if there is a link between offshore wind development and whales washing up on shore.

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- Participants asked about negative impacts on fish and marine mammals we're seeing in other jurisdictions and asked for species specific information.

Regional Assessment Mandate, Rationale and Outcomes

- Participants inquired about the end use and need for offshore wind in the province. Participants expect that offshore wind, like onshore wind, would be used to produce and export hydrogen with no benefit to provincial energy needs. Participants also indicated a lack of grid capacity to accommodate offshore wind energy and inquired about economics - could this industry take place in the absence of subsidies being provided?
- Participants asked why we're looking to develop Burin Peninsula and about the motives and outcomes of the Regional Assessment (e.g., are you certain there are no companies behind this process, is John Risley a stakeholder in this process, is it in your mandate to recommend areas for offshore wind or could you equally recommend no offshore wind development happen at all?)
- Participants asked how the Committee was put in place and questioned whether a government-appointed committee, paid by the government, could be truly independent.
- Participants asked whether the Regional Assessment could result in the exclusion of an impact assessment (IA). Participants also indicated a lack of confidence in the environmental assessment system and indicated that even if an IA does take place, IAs don't provide enough time and provide no assurance we could influence the areas developers go.

Other Feedback

- Participants asked/raised points about technical aspects of offshore wind development (e.g., structure height, distance between water and bottom of blades, how floating turbines work).
- Participants indicated it is challenging to participate in the Regional Assessment because of the hypothetical nature of the 'projects' being discussed.
- Participants asked whether the Committee is considering impacts of climate change on the different components to consider how that would influence the impacts of offshore wind.
- Participants raised concerns about cumulative effects and indicated offshore and onshore wind shouldn't be treated separately as impacts would pool together.
- Participants raised other concerns about offshore wind. Participants indicated offshore wind could cut off water supply to bogs, which would emit carbon dioxide when they die and raised concerns about decommissioning.
- Participants asked for information about the expected licencing process and the CNLOPB's role. They further asked if the CNLOPB would do meteorological site testing on this area then bring it to developers?
- Participants noted protections under C-49 will be lost with C-69. The liability of the federal government would no longer be there and would be left to the province.

Engagement Sessions

- Participants provided suggestions to improve attendance at engagement sessions:
 - Ask FFAW to share session information.
 - Put notices in the mail.
 - You need a good, open communication line with fishers to find the information you need, especially in the areas you're recommending.

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- Use local bulletin boards.
- Is there a way we can spread the word about the areas you're recommending so we can provide feedback? A lot of fishers aren't here.
- A 60-day comment period is too short. I think that's a tactic on behalf of the government so people can't participate. Can you recommend an extension for the public comment period?

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Marystown Sessions, June 11, 2024, 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm & 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Meeting Summary

Attendees:

Committee – 2 members

Secretariat – 2 members

Participants – 12 participants (5 afternoon, 7 evening)

Communities and Economies

- Participants raised concerns about potential adverse impacts of offshore wind including issues related to work camps and increasing violence against women; impacts on housing and healthcare systems and heavy equipment uses increasing local taxes to repair roads. Participants also spoke about their lived experience regarding the fishing moratorium and White Rose. They recalled raising several issues related to White Rose (e.g., increased taxes, violence, drug abuse, organized crime) they never saw addressed.
- Participants raised concerns that offshore wind would not provide skilled jobs to locals and that developers/government would not honor commitments to providing training programs. They drew parallels to their experience with offshore oil and gas: Over 5,500 people worked in Bull Arm to build the gravity base for Hibernia and Terra Nova. The bulk of the structure was built elsewhere, construction/labour work was completed here and our community was impacted by deforestation to build manufacturing plants.
- Participants suggested the Committee consider past boom/bust cycles in Newfoundland and Labrador when considering impacts on communities and economy. Hibernia reports should include this information.
- Participants indicated: One of our identities in Newfoundland and Labrador is our connection to the ocean. Fisheries and tourism are important to the culture here and we don't want Newfoundland turning into an industrial park.
- Participants questioned how we could evaluate impacts to community/economy without knowing what and where a project would happen.

Fisheries, Fish, and Fish Habitat

- Participants emphasized the cultural and economic importance of fisheries to Newfoundland and raised concerns about the multiplier effect: effects on fisheries will trickle down to small businesses and communities. They also indicated that, based on the Focus Area, the Committee's main concern/stakeholder should be fishers. Placentia Bay is split in half such that high marine traffic is already accommodated but impacts on fishers remain. Interest in shallow waters also has spatial conflict with fishers -fishers are in the south/southwest of Placentia Bay.
- Participants suggested the Committee consider the largest possible impacts/largest possible projects when developing recommendations to avoid impacts to fishers. They also asked whether the Committee's considered how size correlates with impacts. Presumably as larger turbines are installed, impacts on oceanographic characteristics and on fishers could be greater.
- Participants recommended a larger buffer should be used around Burin Island (more than 3 km/same as the other coastal buffer). They also cautioned against the Committee suggesting the coastal buffer covers most fisheries. Other fisheries are also important and the impact to individual harvesters/groups is great even if it's not the highest proportion of fishers.
- Participants raised concerns about data and information gaps, including about local conditions and about potential impacts. They asked whether the Committee would feel comfortable with

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licencing areas they recommend being used for development and indicated baseline studies needed to inform/refine those areas could not be completed in time for licencing areas go out.

Some specific points about data/information gaps included:

- Taking energy from the ocean will impact small species and larval stages. Research hasn't been completed to understand those impacts and the distance they'd extend.
- Fish stocks are already changing and under pressure because of climate change. We need a better understanding of what's already changing and how, before we introduce something else.
- DFO has gaps. They only go by AIS (crab, cucumber, scallop) and throw away our logbooks.
- Participants noted the importance of making the Regional Assessment an evergreen document -fisheries are changing and areas we fish/need to avoid are a moving target.
- Participants asked whether the Committee had access to or used historical data from before 2012. This is important to consider because at least some historic fisheries are reopening, and the 2012 cutoff misses a lot of data/information. The Atlantic Groundfish Council representative noted previously requesting and using said data from DFO and indicated they'd follow up with the Committee about the data/contacts at DFO.
- Participants raised concerns that that Report/work could be misleading to fishers. The Committee should be clearer that a 10 km buffer does not completely protect nearshore fisheries. Cables would still be going to shore, meaning construction and impact to fishers. The Committee also needs to stress that they are providing recommendations. The government could still go where they want and dismiss the recommendations.
- Participants raised concerns about fair treatment of developers vs. fishers: Fishers need to take great care to clean boats/ballast water. Would vessels servicing offshore wind be subject to the same standards?
- Participants raised several concerns related to displacement of fisheries. Participants:
 - Indicated support for green energy initiatives eventually, but a need to coexist not displace the fishing industry.
 - Indicated the provincial government gave away Newfoundlanders' fishing grounds to Nova Scotia and that fishers lost rights to transfer licenses.
 - Indicated that more shipping lanes and substations will be an issue and take more grounds out of play.
 - Asked whether compensation packages would be provided and indicated compensation packages would end but impacts/lost livelihood would continue.
 - Raised concerns about access and asked about what buffers around wind farms and cables.
 - Raised concerns about cumulative impacts on fisheries displacement including that Fortune Bay was temporarily shut down for all fishers except lobster in 2010 and remains shut down.
- Participants raised concerns about the impacts of offshore wind on fish, fish habitat and fisheries including:
 - Concerns about leaks and corrosion.
 - Concerns about bottom trawling disrupting the ocean bottom. Participant also indicated previous work in the North Sea: I was going to work in the scallop fishery in the North Sea, but local fishers were noticing a drop in stocks in areas with offshore wind.

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- Safety concerns for fishers: can't helicopter in for emergencies because of wind turbines in airspace, interference with radar/sonar used by fishers for navigation.
- Concerns about cooling systems, indicating that seawater is typically used to cool turbines and that they backflush filters at least daily - anything going through filters is killed (organisms, larva).
- Participants identified some specific areas of concern. Participants:
 - Raised concerns about impacting any part of 3PS. The area includes spawning grounds, lobster fisheries, billions of dollars of ground-based fisheries (e.g., sea cucumber grounds and scallop grounds at St. Pierre Bank)
 - Indicated that every area on the licencing area map has been fished or is still fished. Monk fish, scallop, sea cucumbers, whelk... Every major commercial fish species is there. Tuna, crab. (Pointed to all green/yellow areas off the south coast on the Preliminary Offshore Wind Licencing Areas maps shown). Also indicated that Clearwater owns a lot of the green area – taken for offshore scallop grounds, were not allowed to fish there anymore
- Participants raised concerns about fairness to fishers vs. developers: If there's a whale somewhere fisheries must shut down, but wind turbines that make noise are allowed in.
- Participants raised concerns about the Committee's engagement of fishers:
 - Timing seems intentional. Fishers can't attend, and you'll be able to steal the area out from under Newfoundlanders.
 - The Committee should be going out to the wharfs to engage fishers
 - The Committee should be engaging our Union area reps.

Aerofauna

- Participants shared some of their observations of aerofauna species and key areas:
 - Indicated seeing songbird species 80 miles off the coast and Mother Carey's Chicks breeding off Green Island – they travel huge foraging distance overnight.
 - St. Pierre has puffin nesting areas, Green Island is one of the largest nesting areas for puffins, guillemots and puffins are out in Bruin. Puffins are close to shore but in the wintertime, they go offshore and live in the ocean.
 - Lawn Island Ecological Reserve is an important bird area. Shearwaters occur there and are ocean-going birds so a buffer around the ecological reserve wouldn't necessarily protect them.
- Participants recalled GPS banding in the '80s and indicated the biggest problem with Newfoundland is they'll do a first-year study, and they don't come back. The funding runs out.

Marine Mammals and Sea Turtles

- Participants indicated that 3PS (and Fortune Bay in general) is a unique area and ecosystem due to the convergence of cold/warm currents. There are species here you don't see anywhere else, and there's a study outlining Fortune Bay as its own unique ecosystem.
- Participants indicated the presence of various whale species and sea turtles and raised concerns about impacts including noise and EMT from cables and towers. Some specific areas/species indicated included:
 - Humpbacks, minke, and sperm whales in Fortune Bay.
 - Orcas being spotted in Fortune Bay.

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- Leatherback and yellow belly turtles present in shallow waters here (indicted green areas mapped).
- Tagged whales coming into the bay.
- Participants raised concerns about marine mammals washing up elsewhere because of offshore wind and indicated companies are hiding the evidentiary data from the public
- Participants raised concerns about sharks and marine mammals: If you have a lot of sharks, you have a healthy bottom, and sharks are sensitive to magnetic fields.

Other Feedback

- Several participants indicated they don't want offshore wind to proceed, and that they don't trust the provincial government to respect that. Specific points included:
 - Questioning how the industry could be considered green. It will damage the environment and oil and copper mining would be needed to develop them.
 - Raised concerns about the province's approach regarding onshore wind including a lack of engagement, downplaying the size of projects, and engaging only unions and Municipal Councils who don't reflect citizens' views or defend their position.
 - Raised concerns about the province acquiring control of the Bays, and interest in offshore wind (referenced the premier's trip to Germany with John Risley)
 - Government workers make decisions but aren't educated in this and don't comprehend the impacts development will have on people or on the environment.
 - It looks to me like government is looking for the path of least resistance because it's going to go in anyways.
- Participants asked about end-use and indicated they do not support impacts for energy that will be exported/is not needed in the area. Impacts could include food security, something we shouldn't be impacting when we're already seeing impacts of climate change.
- Participants raised concerns about too many unknowns.
 - How long has offshore been around? Scotland's had it for 10 - 15 years, but you keep saying it's new and science isn't there. Where is it, it's been there for 10 - 15 years
 - We're a guinea pig. There's not enough scientific data on the effects to marine life yet. We need to wait and see what happens with the U.S. fisheries.
 - You don't know if you'll impact it or what to do to minimize the damage because there hasn't been enough science done.
- Participants asked questions/raised concerns about licencing and assessment processes for projects. They indicated that CNLOPB should not be regulating renewables and asked whether developers would need to go through a provincial assessment or a federal one? They indicated lack of faith in provincial process.
- Participants asked about and commented on the Regional Assessment's mandate. They indicated the mandate is inherently biased because it assumes there will be acceptable areas. It should be open to concluding no offshore wind development should proceed here. They also asked who is behind the assessment and whether any projects are being contemplated now.
- Participants indicated noticing offshore wind developers participating in the virtual sessions for the Regional Assessment. Even if they haven't voiced their intent, they're looking for where they can go and will come back based on what they hear and what you do.
- Participants discussed extreme weather conditions offshore Newfoundland and potential for offshore wind to exacerbate those:

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- Ice in offshore NL will be a huge challenge. I've worked offshore Newfoundland and I've worked offshore North Sea. There's no comparison
- Anything that floats won't work out here – wind is so strong out here they'll have to keep getting disconnected and moved/shut off. Floating won't work.
- This is going to change weather patterns. It might make hurricanes worse, and wakes are going to affect more than birds.
- Participants asked whether qualitative data, such as people's anecdotal stories, is being looked at as seriously as quantitative data? After hearing this information from the public -we fish everywhere, whales are here, are you going to go back and say you can't go into these areas?
- Participants asked about coastal buffers used in the Committee's constraints analysis:
 - Will there be a buffer around Brunette Island? The orange area in Fortune Bay needs to be removed, that would fall within the 10 km buffer. Lobster protection is there as well that needs to be removed.
 - Why is it 10 km for Newfoundland and Labrador and 25 km for Nova Scotia? If we're both part of the Atlantic Accords wouldn't the same apply to both? More distance off the shore sounds safer/could avoid conflict and we're recommending a smaller buffer to accommodate developers. This concerns me because I'm hearing 20 km is better but to accommodate developers you're going smaller. Maybe there's no space for it here.
- Does your report include impacts of construction phase in addition to operation?
- Size taken up by offshore wind farms is larger than size of the turbine (space required around them for safety)
- Would a larger turbine require concrete vs. floating platforms? What is the advantage of having larger turbines?
- Participants asked whether the Committee engages with the Nova Scotia Committee/compares notes.
- Participants asked whether they could expect changes to licencing areas before the next report.

Engagement Sessions

- Participants asked whether the Committee would hold more sessions, indicating lack of attendance. August would be a better time to engage fishers. Crab should be done shortly after July. We work in fisheries, and I came straight here, I didn't have time to go home and shower, have dinner.
- Participants indicated the timeline is a challenge. Relative to Nova Scotia we have a lot more barriers to strong engagement: larger geography of province, lines of communication different, timing of fisheries last year (later) made it difficult to engage, difficult to engage fishers now.

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Harbour Breton Sessions, June 13, 2024, 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm & 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Meeting Summary

Attendees:

Committee – 2 members

Secretariat – 2 members

IAAC – 1 employee

Participants – 3 participants (2 afternoon, 1 evening)

Communities and Economies

- Participants indicated the importance of considering service ports and transportation between ports to development sites. Not many ports can support the size of the boats needed and further infrastructure would be needed (e.g., roads leading to it).
- Participants indicated training a local workforce would take time (benefits of increased employment would not be immediate).

Fisheries, Fish and Fish Habitat

- Participants raised concerns about impacts including displacement/spatial conflict with fishing routes, turbine vibration causing a decline in fisheries, cables impacting/displacing ground fisheries and impacts of noise on spawning fish. Related to these points, the participants recalled a decline in crab and other fisheries after seismic testing for offshore oil and gas, and indicated these impacts were observed for multiple years, up to 10 miles past study sites. They also suggested activities should be timed to avoid noise impacts during spawning season, and asked whether the Atlantic Groundfish Council has been engaged in the Regional Assessment.
- Participants confirmed Miawpukek First Nation intends to provide the Committee some general areas/boundaries of areas important for their fisheries, that should be removed from the Preliminary Offshore Wind Licencing Areas. They also commented on the presented licencing areas and indicated fisheries there. The participant:
 - Indicated that fishers operate out of Pass Island
 - Indicated the yellow licencing areas appears close to the 44th parallel. Fishing from there to the halibut channel/St. Pierre includes sea cucumbers, scallops, halibut, and cod fish. Clearwater is also out in the same yellow portion and some of the southern green portion
 - Shallow waters shown include whelk fisheries, and multiple species are active there (cod, scallop, whelk, sea cucumber etc.)
 - Orange areas on map would better avoid displacing fishers.
- Participants indicated information on fish migration routes, including salmon migration routes, are an important data gap that should be addressed before any development proceeds.
- Participant indicated concerns about fish migration routes and confirmed lack of information on salmon migration routes is an important data gap.
- Participants indicated the 10 km buffer addressed several concerns (e.g., salmon staging areas), and that remaining concerns focus on impacts to fishers and to ports. Specifically, 3PS (Bay d'Espoir is a long way away).
- Participants wondered if DFO has information on key locations or if they only track numbers. They also noted seeing some maps for eels. Eels (small sample size) get tagged in Nova Scotia and go down to the Sargasso Sea, mate and die. They rely on magnetic pull (not currents).
- Participants reflected it would be beneficial for fishers to understand this might go forward whether we want it to or not, and that if you monitor/record information we can influence

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where these go or don't go. Participant also indicated fishers can't be penalized for what they record/monitor and that fishers could be compensated for monitoring.

Aerofauna

- Participants discussed observations in recent years including seeing more landbirds offshore, seeing turrs offshore, observing bird attraction to lights.
- Participants noted community work/citizen science to study bird colonies and other species.

Marine Mammals and Sea Turtles

- Participants discussed observations in recent years including that Laurence's Alley has the bulk of whales, you see turtles everywhere, seeing more sunfish in recent years.
- Participants indicated fishers record if/where they see turtles in logbooks
- Participant indicated past challenges with fishers gathering baseline data: 3 years ago, they tried having skippers track sharks/whales/turtle spotting, but the initiative was unsuccessful. In that experience, reporting these occurrences to DFO resulted in our fisheries being shut down - fishers don't record what they see as a result.

Other Feedback

- Participant asked/provided comments on some technical aspects of offshore wind:
 - Confirmed a lot of mud and rock in the preliminary offshore wind licencing areas.
 - Asked about size and arrangement of wind farms.
 - Asked about cable routing – do they need the shortest route to shore?
- Participants asked about end use and similarities to onshore wind indicating offshore wind isn't needed for the provincial grid.
- Participant suggested separating the Committee's licencing area map into different maps based on depth/colour.
- Participants indicated the MSP program was beneficial for engaging their community, but that it didn't get renewed this year. Being Indigenous we have no contact with the provincial government on this stuff and that's very challenging. We're trying to build relationships but haven't been successful.