



**Leading Light  
Wind**

# **Fisheries Communication Plan for Leading Light Wind**



## **Leading Light Wind Project**

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## Record of Revision

Revision Date	Description of changes
January 20, 2023	Updated logo and project address. Added "Record of Revision" and "Fisheries Communication Team" tables. Updated project map. Updated development status to include planned survey activity for spring 2023. Changed Gear Loss/Damage Claim Form's mentions of "Invenergy" to "Leading Light Wind" and updated mailing address. Minor grammatical corrections.
March 7, 2023	Changed all mentions of "Gear Loss Claim Form" to "Gear Loss/Damage Claim Form." Corrected Fisheries Liaison Officer email. Deleted duplicate item on checklist for claim form.
October 31, 2023	Updated numbering of sections. Updated Fisheries Communication Team contacts. Updated acronyms to ensure consistencies across usage and added "Acronyms and Abbreviations" table. Updated Section 3.0: "Offshore Surveys and Data Collection" to provide purpose of surveys and overview of Project survey activities to date. Added information about Mariners Page and Mariner Updates on project website. Minor clarifications and grammatical corrections.

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TBD	Fisheries Industry Representative(s) (FIRs)	

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACP	American Clean Power
AIS	Automatic Identification System
BOEM	Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
COP	Construction and Operations Plan
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
FCP	Fisheries Communication Plan
FIR	Fisheries Industry Representative
FLO	Fisheries Liaison Officer
FLOWW	Fishing Liaison with Offshore Wind and Wet Renewables Group
F-WTG	Fisheries Technical Working Group
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
OFLR	Offshore Fisheries Liaison Representative
USCG	United States Coast Guard
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System
VTR	Vessel Trip Report

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## 1.0 Introduction

The Fisheries Communication Plan (FCP) establishes strategies and procedures to guide communication with commercial and recreational fishing communities that could be affected by the development of the Leading Light Wind Project (the project). This FCP will evolve with continuous feedback and guidance from fishers, fishing organizations, regulatory agencies, and Tribes. The FCP will be updated and refined over time and made available to the fishing community and public via the Leading Light Wind Project webpage (<https://leadinglightwind.com>). Robust engagement with fisheries stakeholders will help Leading Light Wind with the following:

- Reduce user conflict.
- Inform project design.
- Build a better understanding between the project and fisheries interests.
- Improve public perception.
- Contribute to the creation of industry standards for the offshore wind industry.

This FCP complies with the terms of Lease OCS-A-0542 (Addendum C, Section 3.1.2.1) between Invenergy Wind Offshore LLC and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM). Development of Lease OCS-A-0542 will follow the requirements of offshore renewable energy and alternate use regulations at 30 CFR Part 585 as well as other applicable statutes and regulations in existence.

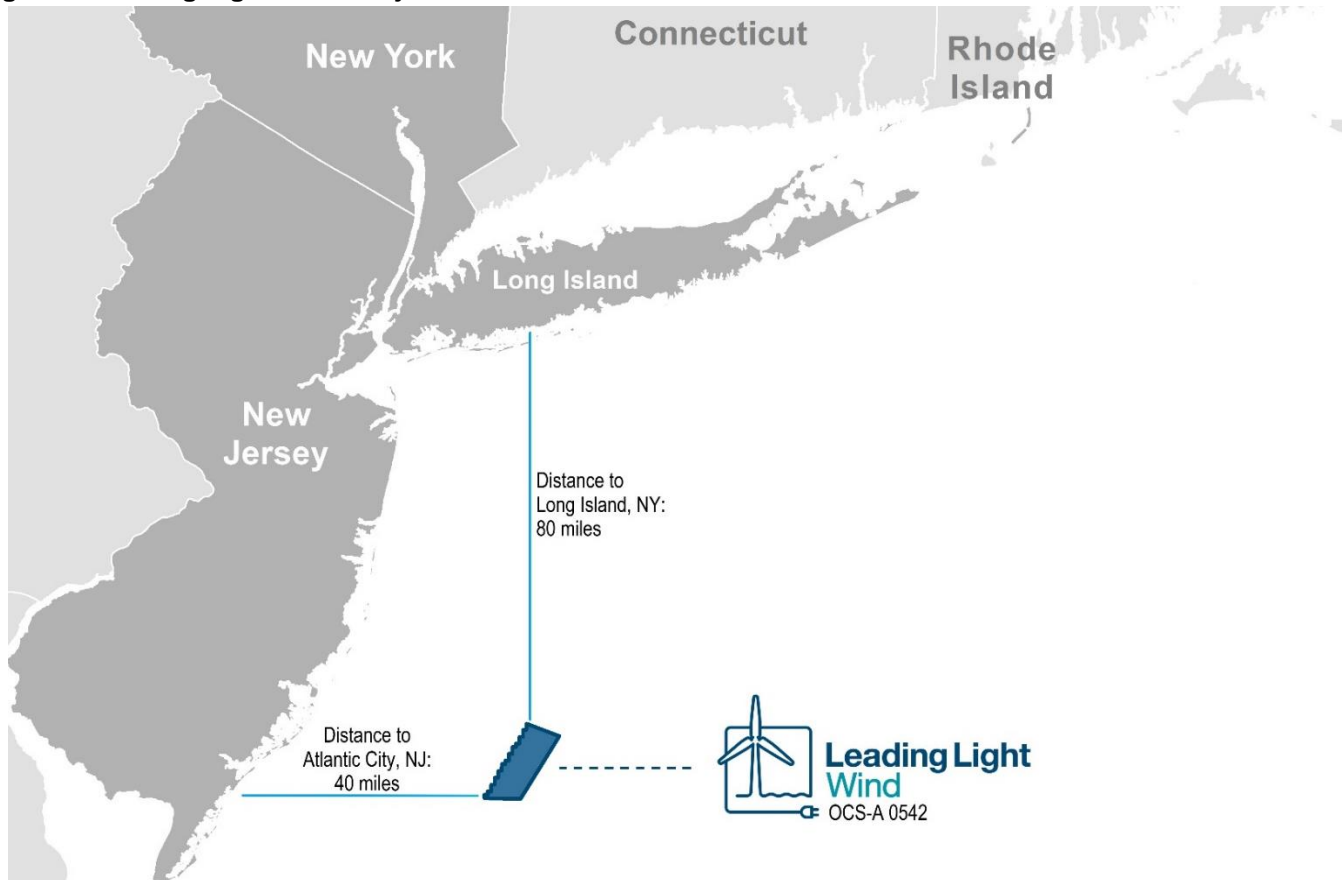
### 1.1 Overview of Project Sponsors

The Leading Light Wind Project sponsors include global renewable energy developer, Invenergy Wind Offshore LLC (Invenergy), and New-York based energyRe. Invenergy and its affiliates have successfully developed more than 30 gigawatts of energy projects that are in operation, construction, or are contracted, including more than 890 megawatts of wind, solar, and advanced energy storage projects in New York. These projects align with the goals set forth by the state of New York's renewable energy policy, which requires that 70 percent of the state's energy come from renewable sources by the year 2030. Invenergy's New York projects operate under the supervision and regulatory authority of the New York State Public Service Commission and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. EnergyRe is an independent New York company that focuses on solving complex challenges and providing clean energy solutions. The team at energyRe has expertise in infrastructure, engineering, and development.

### 1.2 Overview of Project

The project sponsors executed an offshore wind lease (OCS-A 0542) in the New York Bight in April 2022. The lease location is approximately 40 miles (35 nautical miles) east of Atlantic City and 80 miles (69 nautical miles) south of Long Island and encompasses ~84,000 acres of the outer continental shelf, illustrated in Figure 1.

**Figure 1. Leading Light Wind Project Lease Area**



The Leading Light Wind Project will include wind turbine generators as well as an export cable connecting to the onshore grid. The development of the cable to export power and to interconnect with the electrical grid will occur within the power procurement process, which is underway in New York and New Jersey. The project is anticipated to produce over 2,100 megawatts that could power over 800,000 homes annually.

The project sponsors are engaged in offshore and onshore data collection and surveys to support preparation and submittal of a Construction and Operations Plan (COP) to BOEM. Upon approval of the COP, BOEM will provide a Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which will analyze potential impacts of the project and identify proposed avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures.

### 1.3 Principles and Objectives

The project sponsors' overall approach and philosophy to development is based on the belief that the fishing industry and offshore wind energy development can mutually coexist and thrive. The project sponsors believe that coexistence can be achieved by careful evaluation of existing uses in the lease area and waters adjacent to the lease area and offshore export cable routes (the project area), avoiding impacts where feasible, and as needed, reducing impacts through mitigation.

Timely communication and information dissemination are essential to identifying and avoiding potential conflicts during development of the project. Sharing information on fishing activities, planned infrastructure positions, submarine cable routes, vessel movements, and safety zones, among other information, can reduce and prevent potential conflicts detrimental to fishing activities in and around the project area.

This FCP is developed in accordance with BOEM guidelines as well as best practices guidance from other relevant resources, such as:

- Ecology and Environment, Inc. 2014. Development of Mitigation Measures to Address Potential Use Conflicts between Commercial Wind Energy Lessees/Grantees and Commercial Fishermen on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf Report on Best Management Practices and Mitigation Measures.
- The Fishing Liaison with Offshore Wind and Wet Renewables Group (FLOWW). 2014. FLOWW Best Practice Guidance for Offshore Renewables Developments: Recommendations for Fisheries Liaison.
- National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Office of Science and Technology.

Interactive participation from the fishing industry will help the Leading Light Wind Project reduce and avoid stakeholder conflict, create a positive narrative, and hopefully serve as an “industry standard” for offshore wind farm developments in the future.

### 1.4 Fisheries Communication Plan Guiding Principles

The fundamental principle of this FCP is to create and promote a straightforward, professional, open and ongoing dialogue among fishing stakeholders and other users of the natural resources in the shared project area. The goal is to promote compatible shared use through responsible development of the offshore resources. Consistent with the BOEM expectations for all leaseholders, the FCP achieves accountability and transparency through continual engagement, reporting, feedback, and refinement, illustrated in Figure 2.

**Figure 2. Principles for Successful Communication**



Source: BOEM New York Bight Planning and Analysis, Office of Renewable Energy Programs 2022



To achieve this goal, the FCP will focus on a set of core principles:

- **Applying transparency and accountability:** Transparency and accountability are crucial in fostering trust, ensuring environmental stewardship, and promoting effective stakeholder engagement for responsible development of offshore wind energy.
- **Conducting open, regular, and timely communication:** Maintaining transparent and frequent dialogue with fisheries stakeholders is vital to minimize conflicts, maximize safety measures, and develop mutually beneficial solutions that support both renewable energy development and fishing communities.
- **Respecting fishing community concerns:** Leading Light Wind recognizes that commercial and recreational fishery user groups are key stakeholders and will continue to respect the concerns of fishing communities and supporting businesses.
- **Leading with best available science:** Basing decisions on best available science allows for objectivity and credibility in addressing the ecological and socioeconomic implications of offshore wind projects.
- **Incorporating diverse experiences:** Considering a wide range of perspectives and experiences among fisheries stakeholders allows for a planning process that can better address social, environmental, and economic considerations.

Both the offshore wind and fisheries sectors play pivotal roles in supporting coastal communities, promoting economic growth, and ensuring a sustainable future. Shared goals, such as sustainable resource management and environmental stewardship, create opportunities where both industries thrive harmoniously. By working together, Leading Light Wind strives to achieve a balance that maximizes the potential of offshore wind energy while preserving the cultural heritage and economic vitality of the fishing industry, leading toward a more resilient and sustainable future.

## 1.5 Fisheries Communication Plan Objectives

This FCP defines outreach and engagement strategies necessary to inform the fishing stakeholders in a timely manner about project activities, while building reliable and cooperative working relationships between project sponsors and fishing communities. These relationships are the foundation for identifying and addressing the challenges that arise with coexistence in the shared ocean space. To work toward effective shared use, the project sponsors have identified the following objectives for the FCP:

- Promote the safety of fishers, offshore survey crews, and construction crews transiting, working, and fishing in the project area.
- Proactively solicit fishing stakeholder concerns and strive for open, transparent communication to avoid conflicts before they develop, and quickly and equitably resolve conflicts that do develop.
- Identify potential adverse impacts to fishers and related industries; understand, as fully as possible, historic, current, and potential fisheries in the affected area; and make informed decisions on how to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate effects.
- Identify potential opportunities to enhance the safe and productive shared use of the project area.
- Provide a pathway to quickly and fairly resolve fisheries related conflicts that may develop during the life of the project.
- Create an authentic and professional coexistence of fishing and wind energy in which both will prosper on a long-term basis.
- Establish a single point of contact to serve as a facilitator between project sponsors and fisheries stakeholders

## 2.0 Fishing Activities Within the Project Area

### 2.1 Commercial Fishing

The commercial fishing industries in and around the project area consist of mobile and fixed fishing gear operations. Vessels that work in the project area typically travel from Beaufort, North Carolina, to New Bedford, Massachusetts, and all fishing ports in between. Fisheries that have been determined as the most economically significant for the project area include: (1) surfclam/ocean quahog, (2) sea scallop, (3) shortfin (*Illex*) and longfin (*Loligo*) squid, (4) summer flounder, (5) scup, (6) monkfish, and (7) black sea bass.<sup>1</sup>

**Mobile fishing gear operations** in the project area include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Hydraulic Dredges:** Surfclam/ocean quahog fishing is conducted in the project area using hydraulic dredges. Dredges are towed directly behind the vessel and generally penetrate the seabed to a depth of 6 to 18 inches. When gear is deployed, the vessel is restricted in its ability to maneuver. Vessels fishing the project area generally sail out of Point Pleasant, Atlantic City, and Cape May, New Jersey.
- **Steel Dredges:** Scallopers in the Mid-Atlantic region typically use two (2) steel dredges up to 14 feet wide, which are towed directly behind the vessel at speeds of ~5 knots (6 miles per hour). When gear is deployed, the vessel is restricted in its ability to maneuver. Vessels fishing the project area range from Beaufort, NC to New Bedford, MA.
- **Trawling (Dragging):** Trawlers will tow a net behind the vessel on the seabed (bottom trawl) or within the water column (pelagic or mid-water trawl) to target different species of fish based on the time of year, species availability, quota availability, and market conditions. As in all mobile fishing gear, trawlers are restricted in their ability to maneuver when gear is deployed. Vessels fishing the project area can be from Beaufort, NC to New Bedford, MA and all ports in between.

**Fixed fishing gear operations** in the project area include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Gillnet:** Net panels/sections are generally ~300 feet in length with several panels making up a gillnet 'string'. The gillnet string may be anchored to the seabed with weights on each end (bottom tending gillnet), or floated in the water column using a float on one end and anchored to the vessel on the other (floating gillnet). Bottom tending nets are typically hauled and reset every 48 to 72 hours depending on species and water temperature; a floating gillnet is typically hauled within a few hours of being set. Vessels fishing the project area generally sail from central and northern New Jersey ports.
- **Pots/Traps:** Pots/Traps may be set in "trawls" (groups) of traps of varying numbers and length; which can be as long as half a mile and include several dozen traps. Traps may also be set as 'singles' with one trap per bouy line. Traps targeting lobster and finfish (i.e. Black Sea Bass and Tautog) are generally hauled and reset every three to seven days; although traps may set for two-weeks or more if fishing is slow. Traps targeting whelk are typically fished as 'singles' although trawls are used. Vessels fishing the project area generally sail from central and northern New Jersey ports.

Note that the project area is also heavily transited by commercial fishing vessels. Although required only by commercial vessels greater than 65 feet in length, Automatic Identification System (AIS) data indicates transit activity within the project area. AIS however is only required to be actively transmitting within 12 nautical miles from shore. Commercial

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/ro/fso/reports/WIND/WIND\\_AREA\\_REPORTS/OCS\\_A\\_0542.html#Species\\_Dependence](https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/ro/fso/reports/WIND/WIND_AREA_REPORTS/OCS_A_0542.html#Species_Dependence)

vessel traffic while transiting the project area will generally travel northeast/southwest to reach the offshore fishing grounds and return to regional ports; with east/west transits for vessels with home ports in Atlantic City or Barnegat Light, New Jersey. Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) are required by vessels participating in some federally managed fisheries.

## 2.2 Recreational Fishing

The primary method of recreation fishing harvest is hook and line. Two groups of recreational fishers use hook and line:

- “Sport” fishing – mainly made up of privately owned fishing vessels
- Professional “for-hire” fishing fleet – consists of party/head boats and charter boats

This recreational fishing fleet organizes one- to two-day fishing trips for the public with smaller vessels. Charter boats can take six people or more (depending on United States Coast Guard (USCG) certification), while party head boats can handle upward of 120 people. All for-hire captains carrying passengers on recreational fishing vessels must be licensed by the USCG.

Recreational vessels fish in and around the project area targeting natural seabed relief, shipwrecks, and/or artificial reef areas. Additionally, several offshore fishing tournaments occur in the project area. Fishing tackle manufacturers sponsor these fishing tournaments, which are held at various marinas from as far south as Ocean City, Maryland through Long Island, New York, and all New Jersey ports in between

## 2.3 Fisheries Management and Data

The following data sources were used to inform baseline characterization of fisheries in the project area:

- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) data (fish stock assessments, population and ecosystems monitoring and analysis division, fishery monitoring, and research)
- Atlantic Coast Fishery Management Plans and Amendments (<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/atlantic-highly-migratory-species/atlantic-hms-fishery-management-plans-and-amendments>)
- Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (<http://www.asmfc.org>)
- NOAA Descriptions of Selected Fishery Landings and Estimates of Vessel Revenue from Areas: A Planning-level Assessment ([https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/ro/fso/reports/WIND/WIND\\_AREA\\_REPORTS/OCS\\_A\\_0542.html#Species\\_Dependence](https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/ro/fso/reports/WIND/WIND_AREA_REPORTS/OCS_A_0542.html#Species_Dependence))
- NMFS Species Information System (<https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/sisPortal/sisPortalMain.jsp>)
- NMFS fisheries stats (<https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/st1/index.html>)
- Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program ([www.accsp.org](http://www.accsp.org))
- NMFS Fishery Independent Survey Data (<https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/st4/ifso/index.html>)
- NMFS Atlantic Highly Migratory Species database (<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/atlantic-highly-migratory-species>)
- NOAA Fisheries Office of Science and Technology independent survey system (<http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/st4/ifso/index.html>)
- Renewable Energy Research Completed Studies ([boem.gov/renewable-energy-research-completed-studies](http://boem.gov/renewable-energy-research-completed-studies))
- Essential Fish Habitat Mapper (<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/map/essential-fish-habitat-mapper>)

Fisheries operating within the project area are subject to regulations and reporting protocols that result in multiple data sets. The regulatory programs and data collection often involve interjurisdictional management between NMFS, regional fisheries management councils (e.g., Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council and New England Fisheries Management Council), the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and coastal states.

Many of the fisheries conducted within the project area are subject to tracking using a VMS, which creates a spatial data record of their activities. Other vessels have permits for regulated species that require effort and landings to be reported via Vessel Trip Reporting (VTR). These fisheries' dependent data<sup>2</sup> will be used to further assess the historical fishing activity inside the project area and help direct project engagement needs.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/ro/fso/reports/WIND/WIND\\_AREA\\_REPORTS/OCS\\_A\\_0542.html#Species\\_Dependence](https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/ro/fso/reports/WIND/WIND_AREA_REPORTS/OCS_A_0542.html#Species_Dependence)

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## 3.0 Offshore Surveys and Data Collection

The project sponsors will employ a multi-faceted approach to characterize baseline fisheries data drawing from publicly available sources, engagement with fishing communities-- facilitated through the Fisheries Liaison Officer (FLO) and Fisheries Industry Representatives (FIR(s)),-- and comprehensive site characterization and survey data. Section 4.0 describes engagement strategies used to obtain fisheries data.

Site characterization surveys, including benthic, geophysical, and geotechnical surveys will be conducted to help characterize the seabed. Benthic surveys provide information on seabed habitats and benthic, infaunal species, aiding in the identification benthic habitat that may be important for fisheries. Geophysical surveys can pinpoint underwater features that attract fish, such as of natural relief, hard bottom, and/or submerged structures. Geotechnical surveys can assess the seabed composition and stability to inform turbine placement. The project sponsors may contract offshore fisheries liaison Representatives (OFLRs) and/or scout vessels to assist in mitigating potential impacts to fishing operations during survey activities. These individuals may also coordinate with the FLO to gather information about fisheries uses of the project area, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of fisheries uses in and around the shared ocean space.

In accordance with lease requirements, the project sponsors will notify applicable ocean users two weeks in advance of any field survey activities through Mariner Updates and USCG Local Notices to Mariners. Notices regarding ongoing and past offshore development activities will be posted to the Leading Light Wind Mariners Page [www.leadinglightwind.com/mariners](http://www.leadinglightwind.com/mariners). The following list outlines ongoing and completed site characterization activities to date:

### **Benthic Surveys**

Survey 1: March 2023- April 2023

Survey 2: July 2023- August 2023

Survey 3: Anticipated Fall 2023

Survey 4: Anticipated Spring 2024

### **Geophysical Surveys**

Phase 1 (non-mitigated sources): April 2023- Ongoing

Phase 2 (mitigated sources): July 2023- Ongoing

### **Geotechnical Surveys**

Survey 1: September 2023- Ongoing

## 4.0 Fisheries Communication Strategies

### 4.1 Fisheries Communication Team

The project sponsors will conduct fisheries communication described in this FCP via an established FLO and FIRs, whose roles are further described in Sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2. The primary role of the FLO is to provide two-way communication to and from the fishing community directly to the project sponsors regarding issues and concerns raised whereas the FIRs serve as additional points of contact to the fishing communities. The FLO and FIRs will work together to review, evaluate, and improve the effectiveness of fisheries related outreach and communication. BOEM has defined a Project Coordinator that will serve as the primary point of contact for other federal, state, and local government agencies, developers, and other stakeholders. Additionally, BOEM will perform project review, internal and external coordination, and stakeholder outreach for renewable energy projects on the outer continental shelf. Table 1 provides the points of contact for the Fisheries Communication Team. The Fisheries Communication Team is made up of experienced individuals who understand offshore wind and have existing relationships with the fishing communities. This will enable the project sponsors to build mutually respectful lines of communications with the fishing communities.

**Table 1 – Project Primary Points of Contact**

Role	Organization	Contact Name	Contact Information
Senior Project Director	Invenergy	Wesley Jacobs	wjacobs@invenergy.com
Director of Environmental Compliance & Strategy	Invenergy	Laura Morse	lmorse@invenergy.com
Senior Manager Environmental Compliance and Strategy; Federal Permitting Lead	Invenergy	Carmen Bernett	cbernett@invenergy.com
Senior Associate of Environmental Compliance & Strategy	Invenergy	Kirsten Barnstead	kbarnstead@invenergy.com
Fisheries Liaison Officer	Sea Risk Solutions	Sarah Hudak	sarahhudak@leadinglightwind.com
Fisheries Liaison Support	Sea Risk Solutions	Ron Larsen	ronlarsen@searisksolutions.com
Fisheries Industry Representative(s) (FIR(s))	To be identified based on need	TBD	TBD
Marine Affairs Manager	Position open to hire	TBD	TBD
BOEM Project Coordinator	BOEM Office of Renewable Energy Programs	Annette Ehrhorn	annette.ehrhorn@boem.gov

#### 4.1.1 Fisheries Liaison Officer (FLO) – Onshore Coordination

BOEM requires an individual be retained by the lessee to serve as its primary point of contact with commercial and recreational fisheries (i.e., FLO). The FLO communicates issues and concerns raised by the fishing community directly to

the project sponsors. The FLO is responsible for overall implementation of the FCP and communicating project plans and activities that might affect the fishing industry during the project development, construction, and operations. The FLO will have a direct line of communication to the project sponsors' senior management to make recommendations for coordination improvement, to address complaints and concerns, and to share other input received from fishing stakeholders. The FLO will be responsible for the following:

- Facilitate the work of the FIRs by serving as the FIRs primary point of contact.
- Communicate across fishery communities and regions inside and outside of the FIR network in order to educate and timely disseminate information regarding the project and to receive input.
- Validate fisheries information through cross-referencing among the best available data sources.
- Develop relationships and direct lines of communication with individuals who are representative of fishing regions, industries, and interests to the project area.
- Convey current fishing industry concerns and feedback to the project development team so they can identify and work toward solutions, as needed.
- Organize meetings, as necessary, to garner fishers' views of project effects on their industry and navigational rights.
- Develop a stakeholders' list in consultation with the FIR that includes relevant fishery community individuals, officials, and organizations for communication efforts.
- Serve as the primary point of contact and coordinate resolution of issues regarding gear conflicts that may arise. Appendix A provides a draft of the standardized claim procedure established to facilitate the filing of a claim for potential gear damage or loss.

The FLO will be employed by the project sponsors and will work on behalf of the project.

#### **4.1.2 Fisheries Industry Representatives (FIR)**

Designated FIRs will serve as additional points of contact where necessary within the fishing community. FIRs represent a particular fishery, organization, gear type, port, region, state, or sector(s), and are responsible for communicating concerns, issues, and other input to the FLO. An FIR is typically an individual who has worked extensively within the industry they represent but is not necessarily an active fisher. In addition, FIRs are:

- Available during project planning and construction phases.
- Able to provide the project sponsors with guidance, through the FLO, on fishing activity in the area and an understanding of particular fishing sensitivities, etc.
- Knowledgeable about different fishing sectors, seasons, key species, fishing patterns, and gear types and have fishing experience in the region.

FIRs will not work for or on behalf of project sponsors; however, they will represent their respective fishing communities as defined points of contact. The project sponsors may compensate FIRs for their time and expenses. The FLO will solicit the FIRs through an equitable process and will ensure these individuals or organizations adequately and fairly represent their respective industry, gear type, port, or region and have the support of the fishing stakeholders they speak for.

#### **4.1.3 Offshore Fisheries Liaison Representatives (OFLR) – Offshore Campaigns**

The project sponsors will employ OFLRs on vessels involved in project-related offshore activities as appropriate. Typically, an OFLR will be available offshore if there is a Protected Species Observer onboard a vessel. The OFLR will coordinate with the FLO and any survey vessel crew to provide general information about potential fishing vessels and

equipment types in the area based on experience and consultations with fishing stakeholders prior to survey start. As needed, the OFLR will be called on to perform the following:

- Establish and maintain professional, respectful, and friendly communication directly with fishing vessels in the project area
- Contact any fishing vessels working or transiting in the area while survey activity is being actively performed
- Document the communications with fishing vessels, as part of survey reporting
- Document fishing and transit activity in the project area, fixed gear sightings, and fisheries interactions

## 4.2 General Strategies

The Fisheries Communication Team will use outreach strategies designed to effectively engage fishing stakeholders. These strategies will offer opportunities to access or receive timely updates on project activities and encourage feedback from fishing communities regarding fishing activities (e.g., peak fishing seasons) and, to the extent practicable, means to avoid interaction offshore between survey vessels and fishermen.

General outreach strategies will include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Establish and maintain a dedicated tab/page on the project website specifically for fishing stakeholders to access the latest FCP (available at <http://www.leadinglightwind.com/mariners>). The page will include all distributed Mariner Updates, which provide the latest information on Leading Light Wind offshore operations. The page will also provide relevant contact information to submit feedback and include an RSS feed link so that interested parties can subscribe to periodic updates and newsletters about development activities.
- Establish a comprehensive fishing stakeholder email and text distribution list to provide regular project updates and other important notices. This contact list will be updated throughout the project timeline.
- Regularly distribute bulletins showing the project area (depicted on local nautical charts) with a description of vessels and operations in the area, the activities taking place, the timelines, and the relevant contact information.
- Schedule and hold regular “town hall” type (open to the public) meetings and webinars regarding project activities designed to educate fishing stakeholders, share project information, and solicit feedback.
- Attend Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council and New England Fisheries Management Council meetings to be readily available to answer questions for those in attendance.
- Participate in existing offshore wind meetings where federal (e.g., BOEM, NMFS) and state (e.g., New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection) agencies participate. The Fisheries Communication Team will be in attendance and will be available to answer questions from those in attendance.
- Publish announcements and share project updates with print and online industry publications and local news outlets.
- Establish specific methods for communicating with fishers while they are at sea.
- Issue Local Notice(s) to Mariners ahead of any offshore activities, as required; maintain Mariner Updates on project website (<http://www.leadinglightwind.com/mariners>)
- Use BOEM Progress Reports, submitted every six months as required by the project lease, to document engagement with fishing interests, potential adverse effects stemming from the project to the interests of fishing community, and how, if at all, the design or implementation of the project has been informed by or altered to address these potential effects (including by investing in, or directing benefits to fishing interests).



### 4.3 Commercial Fisheries Engagement Strategies

In all cases, early identification of the commercial fisheries within and in proximity to the project area and engagement with the specific users is paramount to the success of this FCP. The Fisheries Communication Team is responsible for engaging with commercial fishing organizations (e.g., Responsible Offshore Development Alliance), local leaders who represent the various gear types used in the area, and individual fishers. Additional engagement strategies specific to commercial fisheries users of the project area include the following:

- Engage fixed-gear fishers to establish a set of guiding principles and procedures for the (1) identification of fixed gear to work around or temporary relocation if needed; (2) process for filing claims associated with lost or damaged gear; and (3) agreed upon methods to determine any required mitigations.
- Schedule meetings with local fishers (e.g., port meetings, webinars) when offshore operational plans and dates are confirmed, to discuss the activity and identify potential conflicts.
- Establish and support regular “port hours” with an open-door policy in local ports to encourage regular, local engagement to help identify and characterize important local details regarding fisheries operations and practices.
- Engage local fishers to serve as OFLRs on vessels working in the project area, and secure local vessels to function as scout boats during offshore activities.
- Participate in commercial fishing conferences and trade shows as a vendor to provide an additional point of engagement.

### 4.4 Recreational Fisheries Engagement Strategies

Recreational fisheries users who may be affected by project activities in the project area are represented by national organizations (e.g., Recreational Fishing Alliance and American Sportfishing Association), local organizations (e.g., United Boatman of New Jersey, New Jersey Saltwater Fishermen), clubs (e.g., Beach Haven Marlin & Tuna Club, Atlantic City Saltwater Anglers), and individual fishers. Through these organizations, the Fisheries Communication Team will:

- Engage the professional associations representing the “for-hire” fleet of party and charter boats and schedule meetings to share information and obtain feedback.
- Identify and engage local offshore fishing clubs, attend meetings, deliver educational presentations, and solicit feedback.
- Identify offshore fishing tournaments and dates; engage with tournament organizers; share operational plans and contact information; and identify and monitor the VHF channel used by the tournament.
- Participate in sportfishing conferences and trade shows as a vendor to provide an additional point of engagement and educate the recreational fishing community.

### 4.5 Planning for Subsequent Project Stages

As the development of the project progresses, the FCP will be updated in accordance with the project phases identified below. These updates will reflect the shared experiences of project sponsors and the Fisheries Communication Team, and ongoing engagement with the fishing community, regulatory agencies, and Tribes. The project sponsors will make an updated and refined version of the FCP available to the fishing community and public via the Leading Light Wind webpage (<https://leadinglightwind.com>). The project website will provide an avenue for receiving and addressing public comments.

- **Surveys and Data Collection** – In addition to analyzing existing fisheries data, this phase of activity will include data collection and survey campaigns which may include but are not limited to benthic, geophysical, and geotechnical, and surveys. The Fisheries Communication Team will notify applicable ocean users of the timing and scope of planned activities two weeks in advance of any field survey operations.
- **Design and COP Preparation** - The project sponsors will use survey data and fisheries inputs resulting from engagement undertaken by the Fisheries Communication Team to inform the project design and layout (e.g., wind turbine generators, offshore substation foundations, inter-array cable, and export cable routes) and reduce conflicts. The FCP will be adjusted as necessary to reflect continued engagement with agencies during the design and COP preparation phases of the project.
- **Construction and Installation** – The Fisheries Communication Team will be apprised of any construction-related surveys. Ahead of construction and installation activities, the Fisheries Communication Team will facilitate ongoing communication and engagement with the fishing community and adjust activity timing and scope as appropriate to reduce conflicts. In accordance with BOEM's Survey Guidelines for Renewable Energy Development, the project sponsors will perform, as required, pre-construction fish trawl surveys.
- **Decommissioning** – Prior to the decommissioning, the FCP will be updated to address this final phase of the project. As part of planning for project decommissioning, the Fisheries Communication Team will facilitate ongoing communication and engagement with the fishing community and adjust activity timing and scope as appropriate to reduce conflicts.

The FCP will evolve based on project activities being executed. This evolution will be based on feedback and guidance from fishers, fishing organizations, agencies, and Tribes and the shared experiences of the project sponsors and stakeholders involved in the project and will require the continued engagement and dedication of all parties to be effective.

## 5.0 Coordination of Engagement Across Leases

New York Bight leaseholders have begun to engage with one another in introductory meetings, with the shared goal of reducing burdens on resource-limited agencies and stakeholders. The Fisheries Communication Team participates in the ACP Fisheries Subcommittee and ACP New York Bight Working Group. These groups aim to apply the collective wisdom gained across offshore wind energy projects to formulate effective solutions. By sharing lessons learned and adopting a unified approach to problem-solving, these subcommittees seek to cultivate a sustainable and effective relationship between developers and stakeholders. The project sponsors continue to collaborate with these leaseholders and agencies, specifically agreeing to the following shared objectives:

- To work together to identify innovative avoidance, minimization, mitigation, and monitoring measures based on lessons learned in the industry both domestically and globally.
- To seek opportunities to meet as a group on select topics to reduce the need for individual meetings with agencies, as was recently done for the New York Bight Programmatic EIS.
- To seek to meet jointly in other forums and/or request joint “New York Bight” presentations/agenda items at various working group and stakeholder meetings to reduce the need for individual presentations.
- To work together to coordinate port hours so that fishers have consolidated, rather than dispersed, times to discuss issues with New York Bight leaseholders.
- To participate in BOEM convenings of Native American Tribes.

Leading Light Wind supports collaboration on joint research and development initiatives, including open data sharing and joint testing of new technologies and methodologies. By pooling resources and working collaboratively, Leading Light Wind hopes to accelerate innovation, enhance efficiency, and achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the environmental context in which our projects operate. The project sponsors welcome agency comments and suggestions to further coordinate with New York Bight leaseholders throughout this effort.

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## Appendix A. Gear Loss/Damage Claim Form: Leading Light Wind

### I. Filing a Claim

Leading Light Wind and its contractors will make every viable attempt to avoid damaging fishing gear during development activities (survey, construction, operation).

In the event that a party (“Applicant”) experiences gear loss or damage that they believe can reasonably be attributed to Leading Light Wind’s activities, the Applicant should complete the attached claim form.

### II. Requirements for Filing a Claim

1. Notify Fisheries Liaison Officer, Sarah Hudak of gear loss or damage within 3 days of the incident via cell phone at 919-302-8559. Please provide name and contact information.
2. Fill out “Gear Loss/Damage Claim Form” (attached); form must be legible and completed in its entirety.
3. Include the following attachments with the claim form:
  - (1) Copy/proof of a valid fishing permit
  - (2) A vessel trip report (VTR) for the trip in which the gear loss/damage occurred, or sales slip for fish landings for period of gear loss/damage showing that the vessel was fishing in the area at the time of the incident
  - (3) Proof of vessel ownership
  - (4) Photos of vessel/damaged gear
  - (5) Copy of receipt for original purchase of fishing gear that was lost/damaged.
  - (6) Sales slip or gear invoice for replacement or repair gear (must be identical to gear that was lost/damaged)
  - (7) Location of gear loss/damage – either GPS coordinates and/or photo of chart plotter.
  - (8) Completed W-9 form (<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>)
4. Submit the completed claim form and the required attachments **within 30 days of incident** through one of the following methods:
  - Email to both:
    - (1) Fisheries Liaison Officer, Sarah Hudak, at [sarahhudak@leadinglightwind.com](mailto:sarahhudak@leadinglightwind.com)
    - (2) Leading Light Wind Project Director, Wes Jacobs, at [wjacobs@invenergy.com](mailto:wjacobs@invenergy.com)
  - Mail to:

Leading Light Wind  
Starrett-Lehigh Building  
601 W 26<sup>th</sup> St  
Suite 1420  
New York, NY 10001

### III. Process for Claim Review

1. Claims will be reviewed by Leading Light Wind Fisheries Liaison Officer and a Leading Light Wind representative.
2. Applicants will be notified of the result of the review, in writing, within 30 days of receiving the completed claim form and required attachments.
  - If the claim is found to be valid, payment will be remitted to the Applicant within 10 business days of approval by Leading Light Wind.
  - If the claim is denied, a written explanation will be provided to the Applicant.
3. Applicants who wish to contest the decision may file a written notice of appeal with Leading Light Wind. The appeal will be deferred to a third party for review. The decision of the third party is final and not subject to any further right of appeal.

Leading Light Wind will not be held liable for gear loss or damages that could have reasonably been prevented by Applicant. If Applicant accepts payment from Leading Light Wind as a result of a claim, Leading Light Wind will be deemed fully released from the respective claim. Leading Light Wind reserves the right to request additional information to support review of a claim; the review process will be extended by 15 days upon receiving any additional information.

**[Claim Form Attached]**

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### Gear Loss/Damage Claim Form (Page 1 of 2)

Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and Approximate Time of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Vessel Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Port: \_\_\_\_\_

State License #: \_\_\_\_\_

Federal Permit #: \_\_\_\_\_

Fishing Gear Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Gear Lost/Damaged: Include as much detail as possible to describe lost/damaged gear and extent of damage. Continue writing on back if necessary.

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Quantity of gear lost (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Replacement Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Damage Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Include the following attachments:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Copy/proof of a valid fishing permit.   | <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of receipt for original purchase of fishing gear that was lost/damaged.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A vessel trip report (VTR) for the trip in which the gear loss/damage occurred, or sales slip for fish landings for period of gear loss/damage showing that the vessel was fishing in the area at the time of the incident. | <input type="checkbox"/> Sales slip or gear invoice for replacement or repair gear (must be identical to gear that was lost/damaged)             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Proof of vessel ownership   | <input type="checkbox"/> Location of gear loss/damage – either GPS coordinates and/or photo of chart plotter                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Photos of vessel/damaged gear   | <input type="checkbox"/> Completed W-9 form<br>( <a href="https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf">https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf</a> ) |

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### Gear Loss/Damage Claim Form (Page 2 of 2)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, as Applicant hereunder, hereby understand that submitting this Gear Loss/Damage Claim Form does not guarantee payment. I further acknowledge and agree that (i) if this claim is accepted and paid by Leading Light Wind, my acceptance of such payment constitutes full, final, non-appealable and complete payment for the claim and that neither Leading Light Wind nor any of its affiliates, and its and its affiliates' contractors, agents or employees shall have any further outstanding or ongoing liability or obligation with respect to this claim or the loss of or damage to the gear described above, and (ii) I hereby release and discharge Leading Light Wind and its affiliates, contractors, agents and employees from all liability related to the claim as of the date of acceptance of the payment. I further acknowledge and agree that I shall not, directly or indirectly, assert any claim, or commence, join in, prosecute, participate in, or fund any part of, any suit or other proceeding of any kind against Leading Light Wind or any of its affiliates, based upon this claim. Additionally, I understand that any payment is the result of a compromise of a disputed claim, and that neither this release nor any payment shall be considered an admission of liability by Leading Light Wind with respect to the disputed claim.

I attest, under penalty of perjury, that to the best of my knowledge the information in this Application is true and correct.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Submit this completed claim form and the required attachments **within 30 days of incident** through one of the following methods:

Email to:

Fisheries Liaison Officer, Sarah Hudak, at [sarahhudak@leadinglightwind.com](mailto:sarahhudak@leadinglightwind.com)

Leading Light Wind Project Director, Wes Jacobs, at [wjacobs@invenergy.com](mailto:wjacobs@invenergy.com)

Mail to:

Leading Light Wind  
Starrett-Lehigh Building  
601 W 26<sup>th</sup> St  
Suite 1420  
New York, NY 10001

