

Regional Assessment of Offshore Wind Development in Newfoundland and Labrador

In-Person Public Engagement Sessions Summary, November 2023

Meeting Records

- Going offshore with wind power elsewhere is sometimes due to lack of land capacity – not the case in NL.
 - Not within the Committee’s mandate to determine how it should be used, but the Committee has heard from participants in the process that all those are possible uses.
 - The federal and provincial governments have not indicated to the Committee there are specific planned uses for electricity generated from offshore wind in NL.
 - This Committee has been asked to identify offshore wind licensing areas.
- OSW is 5x the cost of onshore wind. Economic viability is questionable for NL. In northeastern USA, two developers just pulled out of development because of economics.

Negative impacts on fisheries, fishers, and their communities

- Fishing and offshore wind are not compatible activities. Having offshore wind projects in important fishing areas is essentially forcing resettlement of the adjacent communities that depend on the fishery. The entirety of the Focus Area is fished – different species in different areas, at different times.
 - The Committee is looking for participants to share information about where they fish with the Committee.
 - Participants feel that governments should have this information already, they submit paper logbooks.
 - The Committee explained DFO is contributing to this RA, but Marine Atlas is missing information that DFO doesn’t have in digital form; the Committee hopes fishers can fill in this gap for the Committee (e.g., by indicating on maps on tables areas that are fished).
 - The Committee acknowledges “smaller” fisheries (relatively speaking) still have significant local benefits and is trying to get that information.
 - The Committee is trying to get a complete picture of fisheries (e.g., sea cucumber data missing).
 - The Committee wonders if a coastal buffer would at least remove lobster fishery from further consideration for potential OSW licensing areas.
- Effects of seismic work on fisheries – recent study from Australia demonstrating effects on lobster
 - The second part of the Committee’s mandate is to gather information on effects just like this, drawing upon research from other jurisdictions.
- Effects of climate change on fisheries – what and where fisheries are conducted now and how the fisheries may change in years to come.
- Concern that the Committee omitted Avalon Peninsula from Focus Area – no negative impacts will be experienced there and will instead be experienced by those on the south and west coast of the island.
 - This area was omitted based on iceberg presence.
 - Committee has much more work to do, many more constraints to apply (including important spawning areas, critical habitat, etc.) before they identify the areas, they feel are most suitable for OSW for the foreseeable future
- Onshore wind projects have much less negative impact on fisheries, fishers and their communities. There is nowhere in NL to put OSW.

Visual aesthetic

- Participant noted losing sight of land at 32 miles.

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Federal / provincial government mandates

- Participants feel that Federal and Provincial governments' desire to develop OSW is out of nowhere.
- Developing the regulatory framework for OSW is being handled incorrectly by federal and provincial governments.
- Seems like federal and provincial governments are competing in a way (with province's recent focus on onshore wind development).

Committee mandate

- The broad mandate is hindering the process, makes it hard to determine impacts without knowing what is being proposed, where, and for what purpose.
 - The Committee agrees it is a challenge and understands the frustration.
- The Committee's recommended OSW licensing areas are just recommendations for government consideration. Governments are not compelled to accept these recommendations. Question on if OSW will be placed in existing oil and gas fields, and the further impact that could cause to fishers.
 - The Committee is not conducting an environmental impact assessment a specific project The Committee has no intention of recommending the placement of OSW in high conflict areas with other industries. It is attempting to obtain an overall view of ocean uses and determine out how OSW can fit within.

Suggestions for future open houses

- Have more information on effects.
- Give a presentation and have a Q/A rather than open house style.
- Reach out directly to Energy Advisory Boards and Municipalities.
- Mail drop flyers with questionnaire, have drop box for completed questionnaires at sessions.
- Advertise on local radio (VOCM specifically).
- Do an on-air interview with local media.
- Avoid dinner time (i.e., around 5pm).

**Harbour Breton Sessions, November 8, 2023, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm & 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm
Meeting Summary**

Attendees:

Committee – 4 members

Secretariat – 2 members

IAAC – 1 employee

Participants – 13 participants – many from municipalities leadership

Summary of Discussion:

Offshore Wind Development, and Physical Components

- Is the RA only for ocean-based wind farms, not land based?
 - The Committee clarified the difference between onshore and offshore wind, and that their mandate does not include onshore wind. The RA is not project based. It is intended

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to provide a broad view for potential of OSW development in the province, utilizing constraints analysis, effects of OSW, etc.

- What is considered offshore in this case?
 - The Committee clarified that they were given a Study Area from the shore and extended out into offshore areas. The Committee has read some information from Europe on using a 22km buffer from shore where OSW is not allowed within. It is also looking for information on buffers used for coastal bird colonies and has received recommendations from Parks Canada to establish an 80 km buffer around the coast of Gros Morne park. If those types of buffers get included, then near shore areas may be excluded. Some communities may not have strong aversion to near shore infrastructure, while others may.
- Are the buffers the Committee mentioned the same for all areas it is considering, or would they depend on community concerns and interests?
 - The Committee mentioned that it could recommend differences depending on the communities and their needs/wants.
- What is the lifespan of the turbines and the cost?
 - The Committee mentioned that the information it has found suggests that most turbines last 25 years.
- Could turbines be placed within the St. Pierre & Miquelon Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)?
 - The Committee won't be considering areas within the EEZ, as it is outside their jurisdiction. If St. Pierre & Miquelon decide to place turbines within their EEZ in the future, the provincial and federal governments wouldn't have any control over that.
- Water depths around the province are more suited for floating. Doesn't floating increase the footprint of the infrastructure?
 - The Committee clarified the RA and mandate, that projects of 10 turbines or more are included.
- The overall footprint of a project would depend on a variety of variables, mainly the desired energy output and the size of each turbine. The Committee has seen through its research wind farms that range from 2 – 200 km². Will the Committee consider how turbines function in intense storms?
 - The Committee mentioned how the technology is designed to protect the turbines during very high winds and seastates, with positive results in south east Asia where turbines are exposed to typhoons.
 - The Committee added that the seabed geology is also factored into turbine design.
- **Impact on Environment and Commercial Fishery**
- Will the Committee take into account the migration routes of species in their analysis?
 - The Committee discussed taking into account the migration routes of salmon and eel.
- Mention of studies that show that vibrations from the turbines result in the decrease of species?
 - The Committee mentioned that they are still looking into the effects of OSW on a multitude of aspects, including marine species.
- First time since the moratorium that they are seeing fish stocks finally improving. Seeing capelin in Fortune Bay. Do you know the impacts on the ground fishery from OSW?
 - The Committee mentioned they've heard similar and are looking at the effects on all fisheries.

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- Fresh water had previously been put into Bay d’Espoir (from surrounding infrastructure) and it affected the fish and surrounding environment. Need to study environmental impacts fully for OSW.
 - The Committee clarified it had the same discussion in Conne River. Very valid discussion. RA will be looking at the impacts on the environment, communities, potential mitigations to the effects, etc. Canadian government not bound by the Committee’s findings/decisions from the RA but will hopefully take their recommendations. All projects will have to have a project specific environmental impact assessment regardless of the RA’s findings.
- The Committee also included that they will be identifying any potential data/information gaps that will need to be filled before proceeding with specific projects. Have seen some areas in Europe where they studied potential areas for 3-5 years to fully understand the benthic environment before proceeding with a project.

Impact on Communities and Funding

- The Committee mentioned it is considering the effects of OSW on communities. IT mentioned an example from the Netherlands of colleges introducing programs to aid in developing skilled workforces for the industry.
- How do communities financially benefit from OSW?
 - The Committee mentioned they are looking into those impacts. Most likely would come from staging support, vessels, workers, etc.
 - Municipalities probably won’t directly benefit from having OSW, as they won’t collect taxes from infrastructure in the water.
- When bringing power to land, there will still be onshore impact. More work on effects needs to be done before this happens.

The Regional Assessment Process

- Is the information gathered for the RA for government use?
 - The Committee clarified it will inform the licensing and regulation regime of governments. The RA will be indicating potential areas for licensing, recommendations for effects, etc.
- Is the Committee/RA funded by industry or government?
 - The Committee clarified that it was established (and its TOR and Agreement signed) by both the federal and provincial government (funded by the federal government) but it is committee independent from both levels of government. Industry is not involved in funding. The Committee does not have answers on why the RA was mandated now, especially in the middle of the new developments just starting with onshore.
 - The Nova Scotia Committee has a different scenario since Nova Scotia has set targets and has developers wanting to bid on areas already.
- After these in-person sessions are done, will there be another Focus Area in the future?
 - The Committee clarified that, first constraints analysis has been completed, now continuing from there to decrease area and eventually have the potential areas for recommended OSW licensing. Also the Committee has asked for an extension to their work timeline and, if accepted, its timeline will shift and further comment periods will occur later than originally planned. Participants can find more information on the Registry as the Committee progresses.

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- Will there be other information sessions?
 - The Committee discussed that this is the first round of in-person sessions with plans for more engagement as the RA continues.
- Will areas be identified based on different aspects? Then once areas are decided, will projects still need to have assessments completed before proceeding? Also brought up concerns from the first RA where an exclusionary regulation was introduced.
 - The Committee mentioned it has asked for clarification from the Minister on not having an exclusionary regulation for this RA and are waiting for a response.

Corner Brook Sessions, November 16, 2023, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm & 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Meeting Summary

Attendees:

Committee – 4 members

Secretariat – 3 members

IAAC – 1 employee

Participants – 21 participants

Summary of discussion:

Need for OSW/Use of electricity produced

- Potential uses of electricity generated by the OSW turbines in other jurisdictions include for export, for the local grid, for ammonia/hydrogen production. What's the use in NL?
 - It is not within the Committee's mandate to determine how it should be used, but the Committee has heard from participants in the process that all those are possible uses.
- With Gov NL talk of onshore wind, Upper Churchill, Gull Island, and now offshore wind, difficult to understand the big picture of the energy plan for this province. Is all of this needed?

Effects of OSW

- Negative effects on fish – important to understand migration patterns. Not only effects on fish, there are the associated socio-economic impacts – compensation will have to be considered.
- Must consider effects on marine mammals, birds; make recommendations on mitigation measures such as Marine Mammal Observers, shutdowns for noise.
- The Committee should consider the terrestrial effects as well, such as bats, migratory bird flyways. There are components of OSW projects that are land-based (converter station, cable, power lines).
- Visual impacts are important to consider. Closer to shore increases the visual impact to people on land (recreation, tourism). For participants in the GH2 project area, there will be onshore and offshore turbines in viewsheds.
- Economic effects, in terms of jobs, are mostly construction phase – few long-term jobs locally.
- The Committee has to consider the effects on human health.

Committee Mandate

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- Importance of identifying gaps, and making recommendations to fill those with more studies, including a follow-up program (e.g., RA as a living document that should be updated).

**Stephenville Sessions, November 17, 2023, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm & 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm
Meeting Summary**

Attendees:

Committee – 4 members

Secretariat – 2 members

IAAC – 1 employee

Participants – 47 participants

Need for OSW/Use of electricity produced

- What will be the end use of energy? This will be good information for the people. We have hydroelectric power, what is the use of OSW to us? Will it be used for hydrogen and ammonia projects?
 - The Committee clarified that the end use of energy is not part of its mandate, and through our consultations none of the industries have expressed their interest in establishing OSW in NL. To that effect, it can't confirm the actual end use. That being said, hydrogen and ammonia production are possible end uses.
 - Germany and other European countries who will be interested in hydrogen and ammonia have their own OSW projects ongoing and have been looking at OSW energy to hydrogen and ammonia production. There is so much energy loss in the process of hydrogen and ammonia production. For no local use of the energy because of the existence of hydroelectric power, so why OSW in NL in terms of viability?
- The Committee clarified that any projects that may be proposed after the RA is completed will be subject to full EIAs. Nova Scotia is going for OSW and setting up a target because they have a need for the energy. NL has an abundance of clean energy. Why is the government doing this when we don't have a use?
 - The Committee described that its mandate is to assess the study area and to come up with suitable areas of OSW development, considering the positive and negative impacts of such development on the social, economic, environmental, and health of the people. The end use of the energy is not part of its mandate.
- The notion that hydro power is overly abundant in NL is not correct and that is the reason why they want to build the Gull Island hydro project. The speaker said he had knowledge of this from his long work experience with NL Power.

Impact on Fisheries, Communities, Health, and Economy

- Will the Committee also consider human health impact – people living close to turbines. There are very low frequency (VLF) and EMF interference.
 - The Committee mentioned they are mandated to look into environmental, social, economic, and health impacts and it will be considered in its recommendations.

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- The Committee should also consider the cumulative effect, not just on the community but also on the workers who will be working in the industry.
- Will this OSW industry bring in \$1.6 billion yearly as the fisheries are bringing in now?
- What data do you have on fisheries at Bay St. Georges?
 - The committee discussed what they have is from DFO and the reason why it is here in the community is to seek your input on where you fish and what you fish, to be able to make a better impact assessment and recommendation.
- Are there any positive impacts to the fisheries?
 - The Committee mentioned that there is experience in the UK where lobster numbers were seen to increase around turbine foundations.
- NL will make more money from the lobster fisheries than we will make from OSW. We might not be fishing much lobster offshore now but, with all the changes happening, there will be a time when we decide to fish lobster offshore. You should also consider where the lobster comes from when the offshore turbines are placed.
- I don't understand having OSW in this St. George's Bay because it's a spawning area.
 - The Committee explained that is why it is here to find out from fishers where and what they fish to help inform the RA report and recommendations.
- The West Coast is known to be the heart of fisheries. We have onshore wind and now OSW consideration. How is that going to effect marine mammals? We will have turbines all around us, and there's going to be a lot of concerns. We have both inshore and offshore fisheries on the West Coast, and you should not put turbines in our Bay.
- What is the buffer zone for fishing around wind turbines / farm?
 - The Committee described that in Europe, they use half a kilometer.
- The whole West Coast is known as a corridor for migratory birds. How would you take care of this?
 - The Committee mentioned that it is in touch with the Canadian Wildlife Service and birds' migratory routes are being considered.
- Wind energy has gotten to a point where it is getting so much. In the town of Cape St. George, they've installed towers, and the environment has no boundaries. They are taking away so much from our people to benefit other companies and countries.
 - The Committee clarified it is here for offshore wind but can appreciate the frustration they are having with the onshore wind.
- There is no way this will benefit NL economically if it's going to take away all these tourism and fishing industries.
- Do you have data on the vibration scale of the turbines offshore, and how it will impact our homes?
 - Another participant commented that for noise yes, but for vibrations, it's not like a generator, otherwise the structure will break. Offshore means the structures will be far from homes and the noise will not be a problem.

Process of the Regional Assessment

- How long is the regional assessment going to take?
 - The Committee explained that it was set up to execute its work within 18 months, with a report due in 12 months and a final report in 18 months. To allow for more consultation and stakeholder engagements, the committee has written to the Ministers for an extension. If that is granted, then the duration will change.

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- As a leader of my community, I did not receive any invitation, why was the municipality not invited?
 - The Committee described that the invitation was sent to the Registry, social media, and the public. Invitations were not targeted at individuals or organizations.
- The Committee described the next steps in their constraints analysis, they will be looking at important fishing areas, marine conservation areas, fish spawning areas, marine transport routes, etc. Relying on the Marine Atlas alone, we might miss some of the important fisheries in the community. Also, the ocean is warming and where and what people fish keeps changing too.

| Committee approval | | |
|--------------------|----------|---------------------------|
| Name | Initials | Date |
| Shayne McDonald | | |
| Glenn Blackwood | GB | Dec 13 th 2023 |
| Leslie Grattan | LG | Dec 11/23 |
| Brian Power | BP | Nov 29, 2023 |
| Paul W. Saunders | PS | Nov 29, 2023 |