

# 7 Myths About Offshore Wind and Commercial Fishing



**As offshore wind is set to take off as the next clean energy resource in the United States, it is crucial to understand potential impacts, plan carefully, and engage with other oceans users throughout the planning and project development process. That's exactly what has happened in the case of U.S. offshore wind.**

ACP sets the record straight about seven common myths about offshore wind and commercial fishing. Bottom Line: U.S. offshore wind, fisheries, and other ocean users can coexist. The U.S. offshore wind industry will continue seeking ways to work with other ocean users while seizing the generational opportunity to revitalize our economy and combat climate change.

## MYTH #1

**Offshore wind developers can develop wherever they want in the ocean and have done little-to-no outreach to the commercial fishing community.**



## MYTH #2

**Little research has been done on offshore wind's impacts on fish and fishermen.**



## FACT

**The U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) is required by law ([the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act](#)) to fund environmental studies for information needed to predict, assess, and manage impacts from offshore energy on human, marine, and coastal environments.**

BOEM's Office of Renewable Energy has [completed studies](#) on acoustics in the marine environment, birds and bats, cultural and archaeological resources, economics, electromagnetic fields, fish and fisheries, social science, marine mammals and other protected species, and much more. BOEM has also held workshops and developed literature syntheses of peer-reviewed literature. Offshore wind developers support science-based efforts to understand both local and regional changes due to development and are willing to share this data collection. Developers work directly with fishermen to design and implement these studies, including through supporting the [Responsible Offshore Science Alliance \(ROSA\)](#).

## FACT

**Developers have spent more than a decade working with the maritime and fishing industries to find solutions that work for all parties.**  
This process has included thousands of meetings with commercial and recreational fishermen to hear their questions and address their concerns. Offshore wind developers have fisheries liaisons that specifically engage with fishermen, hold port meetings, receive project-specific input, and provide feedback and input. Developers also have fisheries representatives that are members of the fishing community to provide feedback and input into the science used by developers. In a major concession to the fishing industry, in late 2019, at the request of fishermen and other ocean users, the five New England offshore wind developers proposed to develop all future projects in their adjoining lease areas using a uniform 1 x 1 nautical mile layout. The 1 x 1nm layout eliminates 30% of the area's potential energy production and creates 200 transit lanes throughout the entire area and continues to allow for fishing access for both mobile and fixed gear fishermen.

**LEARN MORE:** [CleanPower.org resources/myth-fact-osw-fishing](http://CleanPower.org/resources/myth-fact-osw-fishing)

## MYTH #3

**BOEM is rushing to build projects without considering their impacts.**



## FACT

**Since the [Energy Policy Act of 2005](#) gave BOEM the authority to lease offshore wind areas on the Outer Continental Shelf, Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Forces have been identifying areas that are most suitable for offshore wind development.**

Fishing groups have provided input in to the planning and development phases even prior to leasing. Fishermen are invited to provide input at various stages, even before the taskforces are convened and including during BOEM (leasing and environmental review), state, and local permitting processes. Federal and state governments hold numerous additional meetings and [workshops](#) to take input from Regional Fishery Management Councils, state-led fishery advisory groups, and others. Additional information on how to provide input in the offshore wind leasing process can be found in the [Offshore Wind Public Participation Guide](#), BOEM's [Stakeholder Engagement and Partnerships website](#), and the New England Fisheries Management Council and the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council's jointly managed offshore wind [webpage](#).

## MYTH #4

**Fishermen will be banned from fishing between turbines.**



## FACT

**There are no plans in place to bar fishermen from fishing between U.S. turbines. BOEM does not have the authority to restrict vessel traffic in and around offshore wind facilities, and the Coast Guard has stated that safety zones may be implemented during construction, not operations.**

The 1 x 1 nautical mile spacing between turbines in the Massachusetts-Rhode Island wind lease areas is significantly larger than in Europe and was made specifically to accommodate fishermen (1nm = 1.15 regular miles).

## MYTH #5

**Offshore wind development will devastate America's fishing industry**



## FACT

**Although offshore wind is still nascent in the U.S., Europe and the U.K. have over 20 years of experience with offshore wind and fisheries coexistence.**

For example, the Holderness Fishing Industry Group and offshore wind company Orsted [conducted](#) a six-year scientific study that found that the construction and operation of a U.K. wind farm near one of the largest European commercial fishing grounds for European lobster did not have a significant negative impact on the catch rate and economic return from lobsters and [lobstermen](#) were impressed by the ease of coexistence. In the U.S., fisherman have a variety of views on what offshore wind means for commercial fisheries. For example, a [BOEM report on Space Use Conflicts](#), which included interviews and guided conversations about offshore wind with 43 diverse commercial Atlantic coast fishermen, found that "commercial fishing stakeholders' views on the possibility of coexisting with wind farms...ran the gamut from theoretically compatible to beneficial to totally incompatible."

## MYTH #6

**Coast Guard helicopters won't be able to perform search and rescue operations between wind turbines.**



## FACT

**The Coast Guard is already practicing at-sea rescues via helicopter between and around the seven turbines in U.S. waters at Block Island Wind and the Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind Pilot Project and will evaluate every offshore wind project through a [Navigational Risk Assessment](#).**

The Coast Guard also did a [Port Route Access Study](#) in the Massachusetts-Rhode Island lease area and determined that the 1 x 1 nm spacing between turbines will ensure two lines of orientation for helicopters to conduct search and rescue operations.

## MYTH #7

**Hurricanes like Hurricane Bob that hit New England in 1991 could rip apart wind turbines.**



## FACT

**Engineers test wind farms thoroughly for safety and to ensure they are resilient enough to operate for decades in harsh environmental conditions, including hurricanes and Nor'easters.**

Hurricane Bob was a Category 2 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson Scale (sustained winds 96-110 mph). As stated in one project's Environmental Impact Statement, the proposed project components can withstand severe weather events, icing, and can endure sustained wind speeds of up to 112 mph and gusts of 157 mph.

**LEARN MORE:** [CleanPower.org/resources/myth-fact-osw-fishing](http://CleanPower.org/resources/myth-fact-osw-fishing)