

§3406. Offshore Wind Research Consortium; fund established

1. Offshore Wind Research Consortium. The Offshore Wind Research Consortium is an initiative of the office, in collaboration with the Department of Marine Resources and the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, to coordinate, support and arrange for the conduct of research on offshore wind power projects in the Gulf of Maine.

[PL 2023, c. 481, §4 (AMD).]

2. Advisory board. The office, in consultation with independent scientific experts, shall establish an advisory board of the consortium to oversee the development and execution of a research strategy to better understand the local and regional impacts of floating offshore wind power projects in the Gulf of Maine. The advisory board must include, but is not limited to, the following members:

A. Two individuals from organizations that represent commercial lobster harvesting interests in the State; [PL 2021, c. 407, §3 (NEW).]

B. At least one individual from an organization that represents the interest of commercial fisheries other than lobster harvesting; [PL 2021, c. 407, §3 (NEW).]

C. The Commissioner of Marine Resources, or the commissioner's designee; [PL 2021, c. 407, §3 (NEW).]

C-1. The Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, or the commissioner's designee; [PL 2023, c. 481, §4 (NEW).]

D. Two individuals, not represented by an organization, that represent the interests of the commercial lobster harvesting industry and commercial fisheries in the State; [PL 2023, c. 481, §4 (AMD).]

E. One individual from the recreational charter fishing industry; [PL 2023, c. 481, §4 (AMD).]

F. At least one individual who is a member of one of the federally recognized Indian tribes in this State; [PL 2023, c. 481, §4 (NEW).]

G. Two individuals with expertise in marine wildlife and habitats; and [PL 2023, c. 481, §4 (NEW).]

H. At least one individual with experience in commercial offshore wind power development. [PL 2023, c. 481, §4 (NEW).]

The advisory board is subject to all applicable provisions of the Freedom of Access Act. The operation of the advisory board must be informed by the work of regional and national scientific entities. The advisory board shall solicit input from stakeholders, including representatives of the fishing industry, state and federal agencies and scientific experts.

[PL 2023, c. 481, §4 (AMD).]

3. Research strategy. The advisory board established in subsection 2 in developing a research strategy shall at a minimum identify:

A. Opportunities and challenges caused by the deployment of floating offshore wind power projects to the existing uses of the Gulf of Maine; [PL 2021, c. 407, §3 (NEW).]

B. Methods to avoid and minimize the impact of floating offshore wind power projects on ecosystems and existing uses of the Gulf of Maine; and [PL 2021, c. 407, §3 (NEW).]

C. Ways to realize cost efficiencies in the commercialization of floating offshore wind power projects. [PL 2021, c. 407, §3 (NEW).]

The advisory board shall advise the office on the development of the components of the research strategy.

[PL 2023, c. 481, §4 (AMD).]

4. Offshore Wind Research Consortium Fund; established. The Offshore Wind Research Consortium Fund, referred to in this subsection as "the fund," is established as a nonlapsing fund administered by the office and the Department of Marine Resources and in coordination with the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. The fund consists of funds that are appropriated by the Legislature, funds received from federal and state sources, payments from offshore wind power projects in accordance with section 3408, subsection 1, paragraph D, subparagraph (3) and other funds from any public or private source received for use for any of the purposes under this subsection. The source of any funds received from public or private sources must be publicly disclosed. The fund may be used to support the consortium and the work of the advisory board established in subsection 2, including for:

- A. Developing the research strategy under subsection 3; [PL 2021, c. 407, §3 (NEW).]
- B. Conducting research pursuant to the strategy developed under subsection 3; [PL 2023, c. 481, §4 (AMD).]
- B-1. Supporting conservation actions and projects that support species and habitats impacted by offshore wind power development; [PL 2023, c. 481, §4 (NEW).]
- C. Producing reports or other materials; [PL 2021, c. 407, §3 (NEW).]
- D. Compensating independent experts, if needed to assist in the development or execution of the research strategy under subsection 3; and [PL 2021, c. 407, §3 (NEW).]
- E. Making any other expenditures that are necessary to achieve the purposes of this section. [PL 2021, c. 407, §3 (NEW).]

The office, in consultation with the advisory board, shall provide an annual report on the use of the fund in the last quarter of each calendar year to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over energy and utility matters.

[PL 2023, c. 481, §4 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2021, c. 407, §3 (NEW). PL 2023, c. 481, §4 (AMD).

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