

RI Marine Fisheries Council
Minutes of the
Industry Advisory Committee Meeting
January 28, 2008 -6:00 PM
Stedman Government Center
Wakefield, RI

There were 9 people present (* IAC member)

Ken Ketcham, Chair Brian Murphy, RIDFW
Lanny Dellinger* Nancy Scarduzio, RIDFW
Ted Platz*
Ian Parente
Greg Duckworth
Patrick Duckworth
Terry Mulvey
Two other unidentified individuals

Comment and recommendations on wind power presentation:

Audience members had the following concerns/questions:

- How would construction affect the various fisheries? Concerns with lobster in particular because of their inability to move out of an area
- Would vibrations from construction affect the habitat?
- No EIS has been completed to address habitat concerns, impacts on fisheries, etc.
- Fishermen are concerned about being excluded from areas while construction takes places, would they be compensated for loss catches?
- How could lobsters be saved prior to construction of an area?
- Would the cable running along the bottom disturb the migration pattern of lobsters?
- How close would they be able to fish near a tower, would there be restrictions?
- Concerns with the power cable in areas where the bottom consists of ledge. Will the cable simply lie on the bottom exposed where fishing gear can become entangled? The presenter did not have an answer.
- Many of the proposed sites are prime fishing spots such as the areas south of Sakonet Point, Southwest of Block Island, and south of Quonochontaug and Ninigret Ponds.

Comments and recommendations to the Council:

Audience members felt there was a lack of information pertaining to the effects this project would have on habitat and various marine fisheries. They indicated there needed to be a better description of where the cable(s) would be located, what construction methods would be employed, (i.e. drilling the bottom or blasting the bottom). There were also concerns as to who would be responsible for maintaining the towers and what would happen to the towers after the 20-year life expectancy. In particular, who would be responsible for removal or replacement?

The IAC members present recommended that the Council take a precautionary approach on the issue since there are many uncertainties and they also recommended that no action is necessary until more information is available and an environmental impact statement (EIS) has been completed.

Continued discussion on gillnet regulations:

K. Ketcham read a letter submitted by Steve Parente concerning gillnet proposals. Three gillnet proposals submitted by Ted Platz, Greg Duckworth, and the RI Commercial Rod & Reel Angler's Association were up for consideration. Neither of the IAC members present supported the proposal submitted by the Rhode Island Commercial Rod & Reel Angler's Association. There were no additional comments. Each item in the proposal submitted by Ted Platz was reviewed. There were several modifications. Items 3, 4, 5, and 6 were removed from the proposal. Items 1, 2, 7, and 8 were retained. The proposal including the modifications is listed below:

- Each gillnet attachment holder shall be limited to a total of 50 gillnets 300 feet in length
- Each net fished in state waters must have a gillnet tag affixed to it.
- The state shall raise the cost for a gillnet endorsement
- Establish a control date of July 1, 2008 for the gillnet fishery
- A maximum of 10 nets can be connected as a string in state waters between ½ and 3 miles from the shoreline
- Eliminate the requirement to have a buoy every 600 foot length of gillnet and require a buoy at either end of the gillnet or string of gillnets
- Increase the soak time from 24 hours to either 48 or 72 hours.

A specified fee for gillnets was eliminated and replaced with simply an increase in the fee. A control date of July 1, 2008 was selected to be used in the future if needed to control effort. They modified the control date by removing reference to just fluke. They stated that all species should be considered if the control date is exercised. A limit of ten nets in a string was added along with requiring markers at either end of the string regardless of length rather than requiring a buoy every 600 feet. They stated that this would reduce the number of lines in the water which has been an issue with marine mammals. This item pertains to waters ½ to 3 miles out. And they propose increasing the current soak time of 24 hours in state waters to either 48 or 72 hours. G. Duckworth decided to withdraw his proposal having reached agreement with the modifications of the proposal submitted by T. Platz.