**Offshore Wind Committee**

**August 17, 2021**

**Meeting summary *DRAFT***

The Marine Fisheries Council Offshore Wind Committee met by webinar on August 17, 2021. As this was the first meeting of this committee and many advisors are new to the Council process, the goal of this meeting was to provide general information and background materials which can be built on at future meetings.

Staff first presented an overview of the Marine Fisheries Council and how the committee and advisors fit into the decision-making process. It was noted that this committee may function somewhat differently than other Council committees since Council does not write regulations for offshore wind, and the timing of meetings likely will not line up with public comment periods. The initial focus for this group will be transfer of information from the agency through the committee to stakeholders, and vice versa. This will improve transparency and provide a solid baseline for individuals and the organizations they represent to submit informed public comment.

Staff next provided an overview of offshore wind development in New Jersey, including the federal permitting and review process, DEP’s role and involvement in offshore wind locally and regionally, and overviews of the various ongoing development projects. It was emphasized that DEP is not the lead agency for offshore wind in the state, and within DEP, the Marine Fisheries Administration plays a consulting role only and does not have control over policy or permitting.

Presentations were followed by an open discussion on what topics the committee and advisors would like to learn more about. Some of the requests included more information on the research and monitoring initiative and a calendar showing opportunities for public involvement. Staff indicated that it may be possible to get guest speakers who are knowledgeable in special topics of interest at future meetings. It was discussed that the role of this committee would likely evolve over time, and that it would be beneficial to develop goals and objectives for what the committee would like to accomplish. Committee members agreed to begin working on those before the next committee meeting.