



Responsible Offshore Development Alliance

The Responsible Offshore Development Alliance (RODA) is a broad membership-based coalition of fishing industry associations and fishing companies with an interest in improving the compatibility of new offshore development with their businesses. It endeavors, through proposed collaborations with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and other partners, to coordinate science and policy approaches to managing development of the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) in a way that minimizes conflicts with existing traditional and historical fishing.

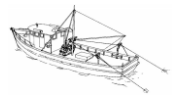
Background:

The National Ocean Policy of 2010 and subsequent initiatives have increased the rate of proposals for new development of the OCS. The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) has leased 13 sites and counting in the Atlantic Ocean for offshore wind energy facilities. Further leasing is underway for sand and gravel extraction, offshore aquaculture, and other uses. These processes could be significantly improved, especially with regard to effectively engaging fishing communities and considering the needs of the commercial fishing industry. Permitting authorities must thoroughly consider advice from the industry, NMFS, and the Fishery Management Councils, and pay greater attention to the scientific research necessary to properly plan, site, operate, and mitigate such projects (much of which needs to be conducted collaboratively with fishing industry members). The June 2018 Executive Order (EO) revising the 2010 National Ocean Policy calls for increasing ocean-related collaboration and modernizing science, while highlighting the importance of fisheries resources to food security and the national economy. In order to facilitate the Administration's implementation of the new EO, RODA will:

- Provide a unified voice regarding issues of mutual interest to the commercial fishing industry, related to the siting and operations of new and proposed offshore developments, in order to promote seafood sustainability;
- Act as a bridge between developers and fishermen to mandate, design, and implement a fair, equitable, and effective fisheries mitigation framework addressing potential direct and indirect fisheries impacts;
- Coordinate among existing local, project-specific, and state advisory groups to streamline advice and minimize duplication of effort, and increase awareness of the need for improved interagency coordination on matters related to ocean planning and development;
- Work to achieve adequate funding for scientific research to inform leasing processes, support mitigation programs, and guide future offshore development planning; and
- Serve as clearinghouse of scientific information and project updates for a better-informed industry and to communicate with Fishery Management Councils regarding industry needs and concerns.



Navigating Together into the Future



Executive Director: Anne Hawkins

Chairman: Peter Hughes

Treasurer: Eric Reid

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Scientific Research and Monitoring:

RODA intends to formally engage with NMFS and other entities on collaborative research and monitoring. It initially seeks to partner with NMFS' Northeast Fisheries Science Center; however, it will structure to allow expansion into other regions and to include other participants as appropriate. The research program would: (1) improve overall understanding and inform dialogues regarding siting and operations; (2) support mitigation requirements (in terms of minimizing and compensating impacts to users and resources), including development of mitigation frameworks (i.e. a standard structure for how to compensate for gear or revenue loss, how to allocate mitigation funds for specific projects, etc.); and (3) inform agency decision-making and industry engagement through existing consultative processes.

RODA proposes to design and implement with NMFS a new model for a persistent, long-term, holistic, and collaborative research program that effectively gathers and incorporates fishery-dependent and independent data and expertise. Existing science programs would be strengthened—but not supplanted—through this partnership, by developing ecosystem-level information for use in assessing fisheries stocks and impacts of ocean use and development.

RODA also seeks to create regional “science panels” or bodies in cooperation with NMFS to (1) identify priority research and monitoring needs (2) prioritize research funding; and (3) provide technical recommendations. While efforts are underway to address this monitoring at state- and project-specific levels, these approaches alone could result in a fragmented program that fails to address the needs of federal fisheries on a regional level. To develop the best long-range solutions to offshore development, industry must be directly involved in study identification, prioritization, design, and execution of well-coordinated scientific research at an appropriate scale.

Science Program Highlights

- Work closely with federal, state, and other partners to design and implement a regionally-based collaborative research and monitoring program for transparent, trusted, and accurate scientific information to address the impacts of offshore development on fisheries;
- Identify monitoring, research, and funding needs prioritized by industry and develop channels for collaborative research on all phases of offshore development (planning, assessment, construction and operations, mitigation of fisheries impacts, and decommissioning);
- Articulate a strategy, through development of formal public-private partnerships, for private and public research and monitoring investments to be gathered, coordinated, and streamlined to address joint priorities;
- Support broad monitoring and research needs relevant to offshore energy and other OCS leasing that intersect with existing scientific efforts in regional-scale ecosystem monitoring, stock assessment, and fisheries management; and
- Determine prioritization of data gaps regarding, among other items, baseline conditions, fisheries-specific impacts, cumulative impacts (including intentional and unintentional impacts), site-specific concerns, and ecosystem-scale impact monitoring and assessment.