

Mariners' Advisory Committee

for the Bay & River Delaware

Organized 1964

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Docket #BOEM-2011-0058
Comments on Maryland WEA Call

March 5, 2012

The Mariners Advisory Committee for the Bay & River Delaware (MAC) is comprised of master mariners, pilots and other maritime professionals and concerns itself with safety of navigation, with particular regard to large ocean going vessels. This committee works closely with the U.S. Coast Guard, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, commercial operators, and port industry personnel to recommend and promote safe navigation practices on the Delaware Bay and River, as well as the approaches to this very important waterway and as such, the MAC serves as the Harbor Safety Committee (HSC) for the port area.

On December 24, 2010, in response to the Maryland RFI Docket #BOEM-2010-0038, the MAC expressed its concerns with the proposed Wind Energy Area (WEA) located at the southeastern terminus of the Delaware Traffic Separation Scheme. This project would have blocked deep-draft access to the Delaware Bay and River severely impacting the viability of the ports in our region. We also expressed concerns regarding safe navigation around wind energy structures and the impact that a ship strike might have on the environment and economy of local area. In April of 2011 the MAC formed the Wind Energy Working Group made up of commercial maritime interests, wind energy industry interests and local, state and federal government agencies to address what seemed to be a disconnect between the various stakeholders in regard to how the affected waterways were used.

The MAC is on record as supporting the safe development of wind energy in our coastal areas. We believe that new uses of our waters can safely coexist with traditional uses. The MAC appreciates the fact that BOEM, the State of Maryland and wind energy developers recognize the need to work with the maritime industry to ensure that the concerns of all users are addressed. The MAC does not oppose the Maryland WEA as currently described.

However, the MAC does wish to express its concern that WEA projects are proceeding prior to the completion of the United States Coast Guard's Atlantic Coast Port Access Route Study. The results of the study should indicate how coastal commercial vessel traffic transits between ports on the East Coast through areas that may be designated for future WEA development. The MAC encourages the continued dialog between all concerned parties.

Respectfully submitted,

Captain Stephen A. Roberts
Chairman

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