

Rhode Island Commercial Fisheries Blueprint for Resilience Launch Event

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Notes from the Innovative Seafood Marketing Breakout Group

Moderator: Shaye Rooney

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Participants: Shaye Rooney (Commercial Fisheries Center of RI), Christa Bank (Vineyard Wind), Stephen Barry (quahogger), Ken Payne (Systems Aesthetics LLC), Ed Rooney (Verizon Subcable Ops / Small Marine Electronics Business)

Goal: Protect access to public infrastructure and seascapes for fishing activities

The purpose of this breakout discussion is to come away with a clear understanding of:

- What do we need to do? (the key issues, barriers, next steps)
- How are we going to do it?
- Who needs to be involved?

Summary: The Working Waters and Coastlines breakout group included individuals affiliated with the commercial fishing industry and representatives of the wind farm, social enterprise, and public planning worlds. They discussed competition for space along the waterfront as well as user group conflicts in the bay and salt ponds (aquaculture) and ocean waters (wind farms). The group came up with several suggestions to address some of these issues. For example, wind farm cables could be laid down in a hub-and-spoke model instead of a "spider web" pattern. To address the high prices at marinas that occur because of competition with pleasure boats, the group suggested a tax write-off for marinas that provide a section for commercial boats (this would require legislative action).

NOTES:

Waterfronts: Economics are forcing the fishermen out of places like Westerly. The fishermen need dock space where they can afford to tie up a boat for the summer. Criteria for who's really serious about the business. Martha's Vineyard has been through the same issue. They established some criteria. What constitutes a working waterfront? We need guidelines. Coastal Resources Management Plan. Implementation by town docks. Need to do this in 12-15 months. CRMC, State Planning Council. Wickford has a town dock – ancient municipal function. Jerusalem has a state pier that feels more like a park. Tax credits for marinas who have a section for commercial guys? Entice private business to be part of the solution. This would be a legislative solution.

Wind farms: The wind farms have been able to bypass input of fishermen. Not transparent. Have industry work with developers to change the layout of turbines to allow for fishing activities within the leased areas. Also, work to encourage more environmental research be done concerning the construction and development of these projects to minimize the impacts as much as possible.

Cables: The depth of the wind farm cables is an issue – will they interfere with the fishermen's gear? What about barriers in the soil that prevent them from burying it? One idea in the group is to try a hub and spoke design instead of the "spiderweb" we now have. Third party insurer for gear hangups.

Aquaculture: Oysters can only have 5% of salt ponds.