

May 9, 2023 | STAC Subcommittee Kickoff

Attendees: Mark Nardi (Subcommittee Chair, STAC Member, USGS MD-DE-DC Water Science Center), Anna Fagan (Deputy Director, CIB), Bart Wilson (Geomorphologist, FWS), Breck Sullivan (USGS MD-DE-DC Water Science Center), Lesley Baggett (Environmental Consultant, AKRF), Doug Janiec (STAC Vice Chair/Restoration Ecologist, Sovereign Consulting), David Krantz (Oceanographer and Coastal Geologist, University of Toledo), Christophe Tulou (Executive Director, CIB), Meghan Noe Fellows (Director of Science and Restoration, CIB)

- Meetings of the subcommittee will be open to the public, but there will be no public hearing/listening session format offered. Other permitting and regulatory agencies will conduct hearings and CIB doing so would be redundant. The public may observe meetings, but they will not be asked to participate. The public would be able to comment by reaching out to CIB after the meeting.
- EIS is anticipated by September 1, followed by 45-day comment period. It will be lengthy (~1200 pages), but should be organized by section so that interest areas can be easily identified. Primary concerns, as they related to onshoring cables:
 - Living environment (clams, crabs, benthic, etc.)
 - Sediment transport and movement
 - EMF
 - Groundwater / surface water flowpaths
 - Recreational / commercial fisheries
- Final product should include science-based assessment that the Center may refer to to determine its position on the project. This assessment could be in the form of a memo/letter or white paper–subcommittee to decide.
- The subcommittee will be supported by CIB staff through:
 - Providing cloud storage space for subcommittee documents.
 - Meeting support.
 - Staff synthesis: If the STAC identifies a knowledge gap, CIB could provide a synthesis of known information (this is likely a limited option to highest priorities)
- At 28 April STAC meeting when subcommittee was introduced, EPA requested job description for committee member so that they may locate an expert to support. See question below regarding conflict of interest.
- Subcommittee will strive to reach collective agreement on findings.
- Next meeting not before two weeks. Meetings should be frequent ahead of meeting with US Wind. Subcommittee should review the COP during this time. CIB to provide link to COP, shared drive, meeting notes, and will arrange next meetings on Tuesday afternoons.
- Expertise gaps: fisheries ecologist, Inland Bays marine contractor

Questions:

- When can we see a draft of the EIS? Can it be made searchable or organized in such a way that we can easily locate information as it pertains to the Inland Bays?
- What is US Wind's definition of "confidential"? Are they willing to provide this subcommittee with formal permissions to review documents/data deemed confidential?
- Have there been any equivalent EIS on projects in the Inland Bays in the last 20 years?
- Should we be concerned about a conflict of interest with the EPA, a regulatory agency, participating in these efforts? Are technical staff separated from regulation?