

**RI Ocean SAMP Commercial Fisheries Issues and Opportunities**  
**Draft 3/24/2009**

*This document reflects input received from commercial fishermen and fisheries stakeholders during Ocean SAMP meetings and written and verbal communication that took place between October 2008 and March 2009.*

**Commercial Fisheries Issues**

1. A wind farm developer has been selected and potential wind farm sites have been identified before the Ocean SAMP planning process has been completed.
2. To protect fisheries within the SAMP area, there is a need for more and better information concerning fisheries resources and habitats as well as the potential impacts of construction, operation, and decommissioning of wind turbines, undersea cables, and other offshore renewable energy infrastructure.
3. Offshore renewable energy development may severely impact fishermen's livelihoods and fishing communities by bringing about reduced catches, gear loss or damage, reduced access to key fishing grounds, and reduced income.
4. Strategies and tools must be developed to fairly and efficiently mitigate the potential impacts of offshore renewable energy development on fishermen and/or compensate fishermen for their losses.
5. Offshore renewable energy development may create navigational and safety hazards by increasing ship traffic; limiting maneuvering room; interfering with radar and visibility; and placing hazardous undersea cables and other infrastructure in or near fishing grounds and/or navigational areas.
6. Other fisheries regulatory agencies and experts have not been adequately engaged in the Ocean SAMP planning process.
7. Global climate change is expected to have detrimental impacts on fisheries resources.

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**Commercial Fisheries Opportunities**

1. Offshore renewable energy structures may be used to create new fish habitat, which could benefit both commercial and recreational fisheries provided that fishermen are permitted to fish near the structures.
2. The construction and operation of offshore renewable energy facilities could lead to new employment opportunities for fishermen and fishing vessels.
3. The ocean zoning plan that will result from the Ocean SAMP process may provide protection for fisheries resources and fishing uses, both in state and federal waters.
4. The development of offshore renewable energy infrastructure may provide opportunities for fishermen to be directly involved in fisheries research.
5. Offshore renewable energy infrastructure may enhance marine safety if used as weather stations or if equipped with mechanisms that strengthen VHF/cell phone signals.
6. Offshore renewable energy infrastructure may also be used as offshore aquaculture facilities.