

DOC Meeting Summary

Date: January 21, 2026

Location: Virtual Meeting

Objectives: The overall objective of the meeting was to clarify the different points of view across the DOC, so the RFA team could better understand potential areas of consensus on the topic of program eligibility.

Agenda:

- Introduction, Meeting Purpose, and Goals
- Update on Topics Addressed in 12/19/2025 and 1/9/2026 Meetings
- Claimant Eligibility Questions (Set 2)
- Administrative Items

Actions

- DOC members and alternates to continue to promote the 2/2/2026 public webinar on the RFA Project
- DOC members to review the next set of design fund questions and discuss amongst their relevant caucus ahead of the March 9th cross-caucus meeting

Participants

Commercial Fishing	States	Developers	Ex-Officio	Observers	Project Team
Beth Casoni	Brad Schondelmeier	Brian Krevor	Ursula Howson	Julia Logan	Pat Field
Hank Soule	Erin Wilkinson	Rick Robins	Brian Hooker	Lisa Berry Engler	Orran Brown, Jr.
Jeff Kaelin	Todd Janeski	Ross Pearsall	Morgan Brumbauer		Jan Matthiesen
Joe Gilbert	Joe Cimino	Samuel Ascii			Caroline Coccoli
Lane Johnston		Elizabeth Kordowski			Laura Singer
Peter Hughes					Deirdre Boelke
Vincent Balzano					Sydney Gustafson
Roy Diehl					Kris Ohleth
Bonnie Brady					Joli Millner
Wes Townsend					Charlotte Goeb
					Justin Wind

1. Introduction, Meeting Purpose, and Goals

The RFA project team welcomed the attendees, provided an overview of the meeting's agenda, and outlined the main objectives of the discussion.

2. Update on Topics Addressed in 12/19/2025 and 1/9/2026 Meetings

The project team provided a brief overview of the topics addressed in the two most recent DOC meetings and shared their intent to circulate an updated design principles document soon. The project team also briefly summarized how feedback from the DOC has been synthesized to date, where there are areas of consensus and where further discussion is required.

3. Claimant Eligibility Questions (Set 2)

The project team introduced the main questions that would be discussed at this meeting, noting that these questions had already been discussed within each of the individual caucuses. The questions included:

- What specific geographic area for each project (or “affected area”) is relevant under the compensation framework?
- What milestone triggers the reference/lookback period for claimant eligibility?
- How far back in time from the lookback date should fishing activity be considered?
- In how many of those lookback years must a claimant have fished in the affected area(s) before the lookback trigger date?
- What level of historic fishing effort in any particular year qualifies that year for the fisherman?
- Must a claimant’s past fishing activity be the same or similar to the allegedly impacted fishing activity?
- What options should exist for fishing community members who fall outside of the default rules for claimant eligibility?

The group initially discussed whether the geographic area for determining eligibility to the regional fund should be defined as the offshore wind project area plus a buffer. The conversation focused on *why* a buffer would or would not be important with respect to eligibility. There was consensus that some kind of buffer would be important because the “best available data” may not be high enough resolution to accurately capture fishing activity that starts and ends outside of project area boundaries. However, the conversation highlighted that the size of the buffer should be considered in the context of the overall project footprint. One representative mentioned that since a buffer for the regional fund would preempt a project’s impact assessment for its COP, a buffer may be outside of the regional program’s scope.

The group then discussed the pros and cons of using longer versus shorter lookback periods to determine eligibility to the regional fund. Shorter periods were seen as better for capturing recent fishing activity, while longer periods were viewed as more representative of a fisherman’s overall history in an area and therefore more appropriate for addressing impacts such as displacement. Members noted that longer lookback periods help reduce distortion from one-off events such as COVID and better account for cyclical changes in certain fisheries.

The group briefly discussed the number of years that a fishermen must have been actively fishing and the nature of this activity within a lookback period. The group noted that even within the caucuses, consensus on this topic had not been reached. The group discussed how to measure fishing activity within the lookback period, whether by number of trips or by the percentage of years with any activity, and emphasized keeping the eligibility bar low, noting that one trip in a given year could be sufficient.

The group returned to the question of whether a claimant's past fishing activity should be related to their current fishing activity in order to be eligible to participate in the regional fund. At least one member emphasized that eligibility should reflect current fishing activity. Others noted that in many cases, vessels may hold multiple permit types. Therefore, any legitimate history in the area should allow a claim to be considered eligible, and subsequent evaluation should focus on whether the claimant held the relevant valid permit for the activity they are seeking compensation for.

In the context of fishing history as a factor in determining eligibility more generally, several members emphasized the importance of finding a middle ground, while noting that the threshold for being eligible to have a claim considered should generally be lower than the threshold for receiving compensation. Members also emphasized the need for a clear, well-defined, and well-supported eligibility evaluation process, including a review or appeal mechanism, to avoid confusion and ensure consistent expectations about who can apply and what data will be required. At least two members noted that providing support to fishermen during the claims process, even at the eligibility stage, will be essential to reduce the administrative burden on claimants and ensure participation in the fund. RFA team emphasized the importance of considering the regional program's intended beneficiaries when defining eligibility; doing so will help balance a low eligibility bar with the need to avoid expending unnecessary resources on claims that should not qualify for funding.

4. Administrative Items

- The RFA team reminded the DOC members of the upcoming public webinar that will be held on Zoom on February 2nd, from 4:00 – 5:30 p.m., ET. DOC members have received the webinar invitation and information to share with members of their industry and wider network.
- The RFA team noted that the next DOC cross-caucus meeting is scheduled for March 9 and will focus on a set of questions regarding claim valuation.
- Finally, fishing industry DOC representatives were reminded to submit time for compensation for 2025.