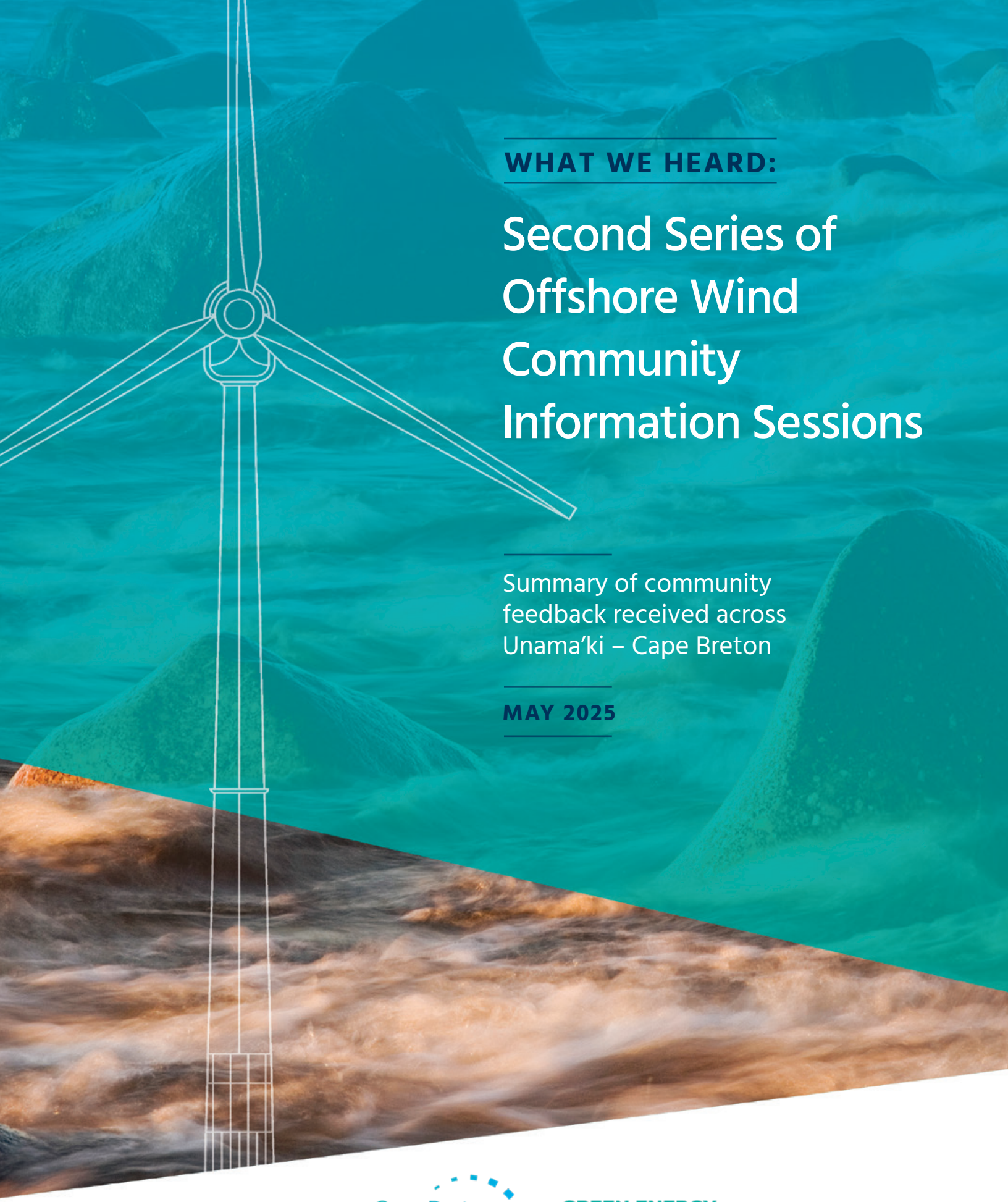


WHAT WE HEARD:

Second Series of Offshore Wind Community Information Sessions

Summary of community feedback received across Unama'ki – Cape Breton

MAY 2025

Cape Breton Partnership

GREEN ENERGY ENGAGEMENT Program

Introduction

The potential for offshore wind (OSW) presents a generational economic development opportunity for Unama'ki - Cape Breton. There has been an unprecedented interest in Unama'ki – Cape Breton for the development of commercial OSW due to our natural resources.

Areas in Nova Scotia's offshore have wind speeds between 10-11 metres per second, which is a world-class wind speed for OSW development. With an urgency to decarbonize our electrical grid and various geopolitical factors, there is demand for secure, clean energy both domestically and for export. It is anticipated that the creation of this new green energy sector could also provide meaningful employment, help achieve climate targets, improve energy security and reliability, and bolster economic development in Unama'ki - Cape Breton.

Despite our region being at the forefront of developing a transformational green energy sector, this cannot be done without the support of Indigenous Communities, ocean users, and the public. Engagement with these groups is critical to an inclusive and sustainable green energy sector. In 2022, the Government of Nova Scotia set a target to lease five gigawatts (GW) of OSW energy by 2030. The Government of Nova Scotia released the first module of the Nova Scotia Offshore Wind Roadmap in 2023, which outlines the role OSW can play in Nova Scotia's clean energy transition. The Roadmap contains three modules that gather input from industry, explore supply chain development, and engage with First Nations, fishers, and the public.

The Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act has been amended to expand the mandate of the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board (CNSOPB) to become the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator (CNSOER). The CNSOER would draw on existing regulatory experience, technical expertise, and administrative capacity from the oil and gas industry to allow a streamlined regulatory environment.

The Regional Assessment for OSW Development in NS (RA) also concluded in January 2025 with recommendations to federal and provincial ministers to provide information, knowledge and analysis regarding future OSW development activities and their potential effects, to inform and improve future planning, licensing and impact assessment processes for these activities in a way that helps protect the environment and health, social and economic conditions while also creating opportunities for sustainable economic development.

As Unama'ki – Cape Breton sits on the precipice of a green energy transformation, the work conducted by the Cape Breton Partnership is amplifying the voices of communities, helping to build capacity, and bridge knowledge gaps to prepare for potential changes that could occur during this transition.

The Cape Breton Partnership has been conducting community engagement to ensure that communities have access to information and can make informed decisions about future green energy development. The Green Energy Engagement Program (GEEP) was developed in 2023 to begin meaningful community engagement, create ongoing dialogue, and facilitate equitable knowledge exchange as we endeavour to create a more sustainable future.

The first major milestone for the GEEP was the delivery of the OSW Community Information Sessions that began in 2023, in collaboration with Net Zero Atlantic. The What We Heard Report that compiled feedback from communities can be found at www.capebretonpartnership.com/GEEP. The report that follows provides an overview of our second series of OSW Community Information Sessions conducted in late 2024, along with a summary of feedback from the communities visited across Unama'ki - Cape Breton.

Timeline of **Nova Scotia's Regulatory Framework for Offshore Wind**

2022

Nova Scotia's OSW Target

Government of Nova Scotia sets a 5 GW target for OSW to be leased by 2030

Canada-Germany Hydrogen Alliance

Both nations invest in hydrogen and establish a transatlantic supply corridor

2023

Bill C-49: Accord Act Amendments

Amendments proposed to change the mandate of the Canada Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board to become the Canada Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator in jointly-managed waters

Regional Assessment for OSW Development in NS

Launch of joint federal-provincial Regional Assessment for study area in Nova Scotia's offshore

2023

NS OSW Roadmap

Release of NS OSW Roadmap; outlines legislative and regulatory path for OSW in NS

2024

NS Green Hydrogen Action Plan

Goals and actions in the NS GHAC encourage growth in the green hydrogen sector to support clean energy, clean tech jobs, and strengthening economic development, particularly rurally

RA Interim Report

Interim Report recommended proposed future areas of development (PFDAs) to be studied and characterized further in final draft report

2024

Offshore Renewable Energy Regulations (ORER)

Federal government releases prepublication of ORERs focused on safety and environmental protection in federal offshore area

NS OSW Roadmap Module 2

Module 2 released on supply chain development and infrastructure needs for OSW development

2024

Amending Accord Acts

Proposed amendments to the Accord Acts obtained Royal Assent

Nova Scotia's Bill 471

Mirror legislation for Bill C-49 to establish a joint federal provincial managed regulatory framework for OSW

2025

RA Draft Final Report

RA Committee released draft of Final Report for public comment

Moving Forward

Final Report from RA released Jan 2025

Final Module of NS OSW Roadmap Released

Proposed Wind Energy Areas are released for public comment in April 2024

Timeline of **Future Activities for Offshore Wind in Nova Scotia**

January 2025

Accord Act amendments enacted; Offshore Energy Regulator created; Regional Assessment concludes

March 2025

Wind Energy Areas (WEAs) released for public comment; official designation Summer 2025

2025

Call for bids in federal-provincial jointly-managed waters

Between 2025-2030, there will be ongoing site characterization work, infastructure buildout, supply chain development and engagement work

Submerged land licences give a company exclusive rights to develop a wind project in a specific area of ocean but does not allow immediate construction

By 2030

Issuance of submerged land license (seabed)

2030+

Ongoing environmental assessment work, regulatory approvals, and beginning buildout

Cape Breton Partnership

The Cape Breton Partnership is a private sector-led economic development organization that works collaboratively to support the growth of Unama'ki – Cape Breton's economy through the sustainable attraction and retention of investment, population, and innovation. The Cape Breton Partnership works to create a stronger and more prosperous Unama'ki – Cape Breton that leads the surrounding region into the future, by embodying values of sustainability, reconciliation, inclusivity, optimism, and innovation. The Cape Breton Partnership supports companies and entrepreneurs through projects and initiatives that follow the organization's strategic priorities including growth of strategic sectors of our economy; increased productivity by connecting businesses to supports and resources needed to succeed and thrive; supporting investment in innovation and entrepreneurship; and growing communities as we promote Unama'ki – Cape Breton as a great place to live, work, and invest.

The Cape Breton Partnership provides economic development support to First Nations Communities and municipalities in Unama'ki - Cape Breton, through the Regional Enterprise Network model in partnership with the Government of Nova Scotia.

Green Energy Engagement Program

The Green Energy Engagement Program (GEEP) was developed in 2023 to focus on meaningful community engagement, creating ongoing dialogue and equitable knowledge exchange that helps communities build capacity and make informed decisions about future green energy projects, including wind energy.

The GEEP is not a means of advocating on behalf of any one industry. The purpose of the GEEP is to provide communities in Unama'ki – Cape Breton with information about green energy. This means focusing on relationship development with First Nations' Communities, fishers and ocean users, local businesses, academic leaders, environmental groups, non-profits, tourism operators, and individual community members to account for all voices in Unama'ki – Cape Breton when considering the potential benefits and impacts of future green energy development. The Cape Breton Partnership will encourage sustainable and equitable development, that allows all communities and ocean users to work together towards a common understanding and sharing of resources.

Partner

We would like to acknowledge our partner Net Zero Atlantic who co-delivered this second round of Offshore Wind Community Information Sessions across Unama'ki – Cape Breton.

Net Zero Atlantic (NZA) is a leading energy research organization advancing Atlantic Canada's transition to a low-carbon future. NZA encourages growth of a sustainable energy sector by identifying knowledge gaps, connecting experts to projects, and leading applied research in critical areas, such as clean technology, pro-climate behaviour, hydrogen, offshore wind, geothermal energy, and energy system modelling.

Guiding Principles

The Green Energy Engagement Coordinator was provided the opportunity to speak at the Nova Scotia Offshore Wind Research and Development Conference in Halifax in November 2024. The panel focused on best practices in community engagement, where principles that guide the initiatives undertaken through the GEEP were discussed. It is important to note that the OSW Community Information Sessions were created and delivered following the Guiding Principles below:

INTEGRITY

Visiting communities in an open, honest and vulnerable way

OBJECTIVITY

Focusing on factual information with no intent to gauge support or opposition for future development

SINCERITY

Demonstrating genuine concern for the well-being of the communities

HUMILITY

Knowing we do not know what we do not know; entering communities knowing we are not experts

RECIPROCITY

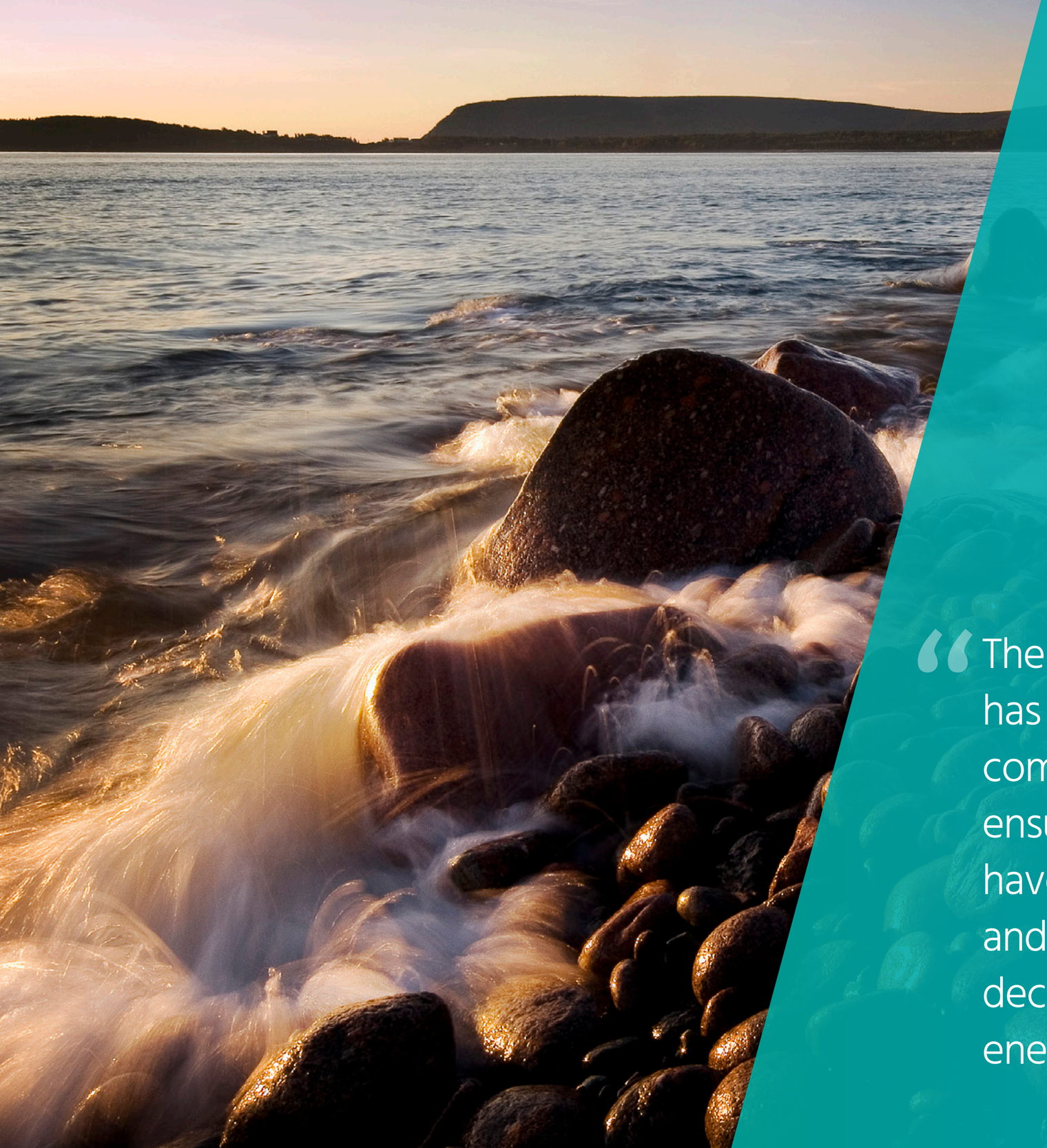
Recognizing that learning and ifnormation sharing are a two-way exchange

TRUST

Building relationships centred on respect and transparency

CONTINUITY

Ensuring communities know their time is of value, seeing their feedback gathered thoughtfully, and sharing this with communities



> The Cape Breton Partnership has been conducting community engagement to ensure that communities have access to information and can make informed decisions about future green energy development.

Communities Visited

Nine communities were visited during the second series of OSW Community Information Sessions in December 2024. The intent was to revisit communities we visited in the first series of sessions. In doing so, we hoped to identify similarities and differences in the feedback obtained from communities between visits. The communities visited are noted on the map and include Baddeck, Sydney, Glace Bay, North Sydney, Louisbourg, Port Hawkesbury, Arichat, St. Peter's, and Ingonish. Of note, sessions that were scheduled for Cheticamp and Port Hood were rescheduled and then cancelled due to inclement weather on two occasions.

LOUISBOURG

INGONISH

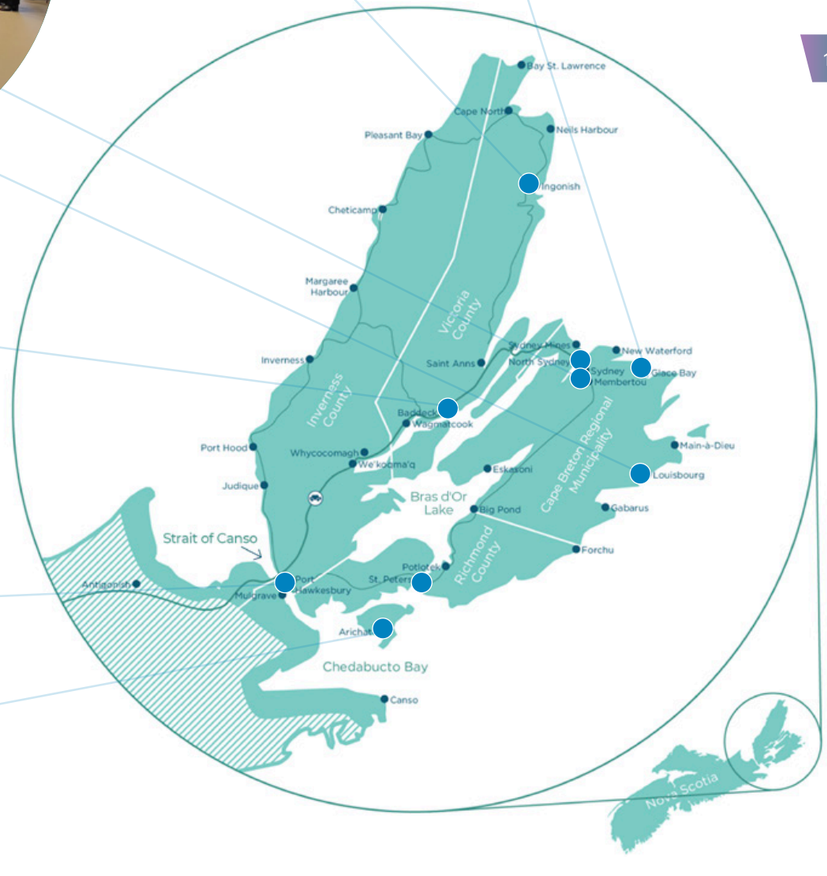
GLACE BAY

BADDECK

SYDNEY

PORT HAWKESBURY

ARICHAT



Feedback from Round One

During our first series of community information sessions held between December 2023 and March 2024, several themes emerged from the feedback collected. There were seven overarching themes, including climate change mitigation, energy end-use and grid challenges; offshore wind technology, environmental impacts, local economic and social impacts, co-existence of ocean users, and governance and regulatory frameworks.

CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION

ENERGY END-USE AND GRID CHALLENGES

OFFSHORE WIND TECHNOLOGY

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

LOCAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACTS

CO-EXISTENCE OF OCEAN USERS

GOVERNANCE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS

The intent of the first series of sessions was not to gauge support or opposition for the potential development of OSW. The central focus was to gather feedback and learn from communities to better understand the local context and different factors that could intersect or be impacted by OSW development. We did observe that in some instances, community members were supportive of OSW development to help achieve climate targets or to avoid seeing the deployment of onshore wind. Many community members attended sessions to learn more about OSW technology. There were conflicting feelings between wanting to address the impacts of climate change that have occurred locally, like Hurricane Fiona, and concern for the associated economic, environmental, and social impacts of developing OSW. Ocean users were concerned about their livelihood and how their industries could co-exist with OSW development.

The feedback from communities indicated that there was a need to continue ongoing two-way knowledge sharing. Communities had the desire to learn more about OSW as the regulatory framework continued to be developed, and they wanted to know that there was an ability to influence the outcome of decisions related to industry development in the future.

Themes from Second Series

Since delivering our first series of Offshore Wind Community Information Sessions that started in December 2023 and ended in March 2024, there have been no significant changes in the feedback from communities across Unama'ki - Cape Breton. The word cloud above illustrates the themes that were identified through analysis of community feedback. The size of the word correlates to the frequency with which that theme was brought up throughout our discussions. If frequency is connected to importance, the top five themes were fisheries co-existence, marine habitat and species impacts, siting, offshore wind technology, and supply chain.

Fisheries Co-Existence was the most frequent theme discussed throughout sessions across Unama'ki – Cape Breton. As a region, the local economy has depended on the traditional fishing industry. There were participants at each session who advocated for fishers and the industry more broadly. There were concerns about how fishing could co-exist with future OSW development, especially on the Banks which have been proposed as Wind Energy Areas (WEAs). The WEAs are large sections of ocean identified as being suitable for potential OSW development - future OSW projects can only be built in designated WEAs. Fishers have noted that these are productive fishing grounds and have questioned how putting turbines in these areas will affect the migration of species.

The overall footprint of an offshore wind farm has created concerns about losses in fishing grounds and what compensation could look like when co-existence is not possible. There were many comments where fishers felt that they had not been adequately consulted and that when they were consulted there was a perceived lack of transparency. It was noted that there will be an ongoing need for research and data collection to better understand the impacts of OSW development on the fisheries – many have asked about other jurisdictions and what best practices exist in those regions to limit impacts on fisheries. Of note, there were many comments about the amount of ocean users currently facing conflict with each other and concerns about increasing conflict and intensity of conflict with the development of offshore wind.

Marine habitat and species impacts was the second most frequent theme that was noted in the second series of OSW Community Information Sessions. This was also one of the most significant concerns in our first series. As a result, when returning to communities, we brought research that had been conducted on electromagnetic fields, noise, vibration, displacement, and development activities that could impact birds, bats, mammals, and fish. We were able to share this information with communities and gather additional comments, local knowledge, and identify additional concerns. Communities emphasized the need for ongoing information gathering and research focused on the impacts of all stages of OSW development on marine species and habitats.

Siting was the third most frequent theme throughout the sessions. With the Regional Assessment having released their Final Draft Report, we were able to share the proposed tiered system with potential development areas at these sessions. Since that time, the federal and provincial governments have released Wind Energy Areas that were identified based on the Regional Assessment findings. In addition to feedback related to specific locations, which was interconnected with fisheries co-existence, there was additional feedback about an OSW farm's proximity to shore, the distance between turbines and the overall footprint. Within this context, marine spatial planning was also brought forward as a tool that could be used to help with ocean user co-existence.

Offshore wind technology is always a central theme within our discussions as participants have questions about current technology and expectations for advancements in OSW technology. Turbine specifications, the scale of wind farms, the use of interarray and export cables, choosing fixed versus floating turbine foundations and how weather impacts the resilience of turbine components in harsh North Atlantic environments were common discussions across sessions.

The supply chain theme focused on discussions about local manufacturing opportunities for turbine components, including how local businesses could potentially diversify their current products or services to participate in a future OSW industry. There were many comments and questions about the movement of turbine components, both on land and at sea, particularly with regard to upgrades to critical infrastructure like ports, roads, and rail systems. Though categorized separately, skills and workforce development were interwoven throughout the discussions about supply chain development. The potential for skills realignment locally to accommodate a future OSW industry and opportunities for people who have left Unama'ki – Cape Breton to return to their communities were important to communities we visited.

Additional themes identified in community feedback

AUCTION & LICENSES: Creation and administration of auctions; criteria included in auctions; awarding licences; timeline for auctions; leaseholders

CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION: Climate targets, emissions reductions, climate mitigation strategies, weather patterns impacting OSW

COMMUNITY IMPACTS: Community benefits agreements; population growth, service availability, cost to taxpayers

CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE: Construction phase and requirements; construction timelines; maintenance and operations

DECOMMISSIONING: End-stage of turbine's life; recycling and waste; cost

ENVIRONMENTAL & IMPACT ASSESSMENTS: Requirements for EA/IA; timelines; proponent versus government undertaking EA; elements studied within EA/IA

ECONOMIC IMPACTS: Local economic benefits, spinoff effects; required local content; business case for OSW

ELECTRICAL GRID & TRANSMISSION: Capacity of grid; transmission of electricity; upgrades to generating stations and other infrastructure; battery storage; Nova Scotia Power's role; energy alternatives; energy reliability

ENERGY END USE: Domestic use versus export of energy; types of final products

ENERGY COST & CONSUMPTION: OSW development and impact on ratepayers; access to renewable energy; changing consumption patterns

ENGAGEMENT: Need for ongoing information sharing; delivering up-to-date information.

GOVERNANCE: Project ownership; decision-making authority

HUMAN WELLBEING: Impacts on human health and wellbeing from increased land-based activities related to OSW development

POLICY: Renewable energy policy; OSW targets; decisions about future sector growth

REGULATORY PROCESSES & FRAMEWORKS: Regional Assessment; regulation of OSW; development of frameworks; development oversight; industry compliance

SAFETY: Safety for workers and other ocean users; exclusion zones; co-existence; cybersecurity; equipment failure

SKILLS & EMPLOYMENT: Workforce needs; opportunities for skill realignment; training opportunities; engaging youth on workforce development

TOURISM & SIGHTLINES: Impacts on marine tourism and co-existence; turbine visibility from land

What's Next?

The Cape Breton Partnership is proud of the work that the Green Energy Engagement Program has completed and the success it has achieved. After visiting communities and hearing feedback about the importance of our oceans, from an environmental, social, and economic perspective, the Cape Breton Partnership will shift focus to develop a program that supports current ocean-based industries and identifies opportunities for new, sustainable industries in the Blue Economy. We look forward to sharing the launch of our new program with you.

We have many activities and initiatives planned for the future that we hope you will be able to participate in. At a quick glance, we will be working on:

- Building and strengthening relationships with Indigenous Communities, including working collaboratively with Communities to identify how we can support capacity building in anticipation of Unama'ki - Cape Breton's clean energy transition.
- Ongoing information sharing with communities through initiatives that reduce engagement fatigue.
- Identifying partnerships and opportunities for sustainable growth in sectors within the blue economy like sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, marine renewable energy, ocean technology, shipping, marine tourism, and coastal protection and climate mitigation.
- Ongoing dialogue with fishers and other ocean users about offshore wind and seeking opportunities to connect ocean users with each other, both locally and with other jurisdictions.
- Engaging youth through programs like OffshoreWind4Kids in partnership with COVE at beach demo days, and working with the DOTCAN Institute on the Women and Youth Technical Capacity for the Blue Economy (WYTEC) to co-develop cooperative training and business development activities in the areas of ocean tech and maritime security that connect organizations, communities and individuals in Canada and nations in West Africa.
- Creating new partnerships that help the Cape Breton Partnership create a stronger and more prosperous Unama'ki - Cape Breton through values of sustainability, reconciliation, inclusivity, optimism, and innovation.

Cape Breton Partnership
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Green Energy Engagement Program

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