

Fisheries Question and Answer

On Tuesday, April 19th, representatives from The Narragansett Electric Company d/b/a National Grid (TNEC) and the sea2shore Project Team presented an information session for the commercial fishermen in Galilee, RI. The purpose of the information session was to provide a general project and schedule update, inform the fishermen of an extension request being sought by TNEC, and to seek feedback. Several questions were raised about the sea2shore and BIWF submarine cables. The below provides answers to the questions raised about the sea2shore project. National Grid committed to informing the fisheries industry with project updates as they become available.

Q: When is the anticipated start of the sea2shore cable installation?

A: The expected start date for the pre-lay grapnel run (“PLGR”) is on or about the 3rd week of May. Cable-lay of the sea2shore cable is on or about the 4th week of May arriving at Crescent Beach on Block Island on or about the 3rd week of June, weather and sea condition dependent. National Grid continues to work with its contractors to refine this date and advance the schedule.

Q: What is the status of the Gear Clearance and Removal Plan for the sea2shore cable installation?

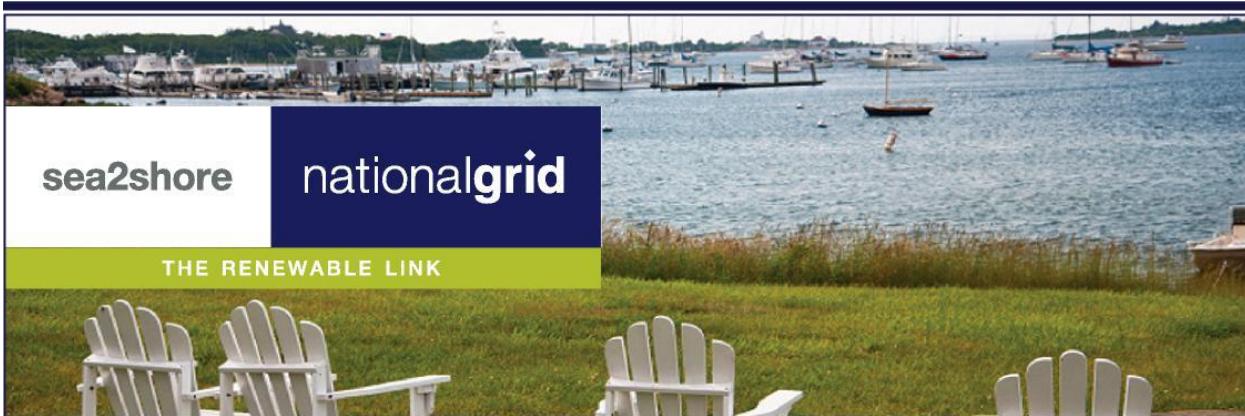
A: The Fisheries Liaison has issued National Grid’s Gear Clearance and Removal Plan (“Plan”) to give commercial and recreational fishermen the opportunity to remove and reset their gear outside of the project corridor, in advance of the PLGR and cable-lay installation.

Q: Does the Plan address marking and communicating areas of discarded debris and gear?

A: Yes, the Plan includes language about marking (with buoys) and/or recording the positions of debris encountered and cast aside during the PLGR or jet plowing. The locations of discarded debris and ghost fishing gear will be provided to the fishing community in real-time to avoid deploying their gear in these areas. Further, any debris encountered on the seafloor during the PLGR or jet plowing will be logged and recorded; however, for the safety and protection of the vessel and its crew, limited items may be brought to the surface and examined. Larger debris that is identified along the project route will be logged and its position recorded including GPS coordinates and provide at the end of construction.

Q: What if I encounter delays in retrieving my gear?

A: We understand that there could be unanticipated delays retrieving your fishing gear (i.e., vessel malfunctions, inclement weather conditions, etc.), therefore the “highest level of communication” will be made so to allow for proper preparation and gear retrieval. This includes regular communication with and through the Fisheries Liaison and RIDEM.



Q: Can my fishing gear be reset along the project corridor after the PLGR is complete?

A: The PLGR is expected to five (5) to seven (7) days to complete. Due to the immediate transition from PLGR to jet plowing operation, we respectfully request that no gear be set between the scheduled dates of the PLGR and jet plowing operations within the approved 200'corridor. Please see the Gear Clearance and Removal Plan for more information.

Q: Is a cable route position map electronically available in Loran C?

A: Yes, this has been provided and uploaded to the RIDEM sharefile site and emailed via the Fisheries Liaison listserve.

Q: How extensive will the exclusion zone be around the DP Vessel?

A: The exclusion zones have been set by the US Coast Guard for public safety reasons. The exclusion zone is 500 feet and the safety zone is ½ mile. Vessels should inform of their approach and may receive permission over the radio for closer proximity.

Q: Can gear be set behind the DP Vessel and what are the restrictions during the cable lay operation?

A: Setting gear behind the DP Vessel is allowable as long as the fisherman abides by the Daily Notice to Mariners. As detailed in the provided Gear Clearance and Removal Plan, neither TNEC nor its contractors shall have any liability for gear that is lost or damaged from the identified construction areas.

Q: How close can gear be set outside of the 200' approved construction corridor?

A: We request that fishing gear be set outside of the 200' approved corridor, at a minimum, but as a precaution, to protect fishing gear and to prevent fouling during the PLGR and cable-lay, we request that they set their gear no closer than 500' from the centerline of the cable-lay operations. If for some reason there is a need to approach closer to the work zone, it is necessary to contact the captain of the DP Vessel via radio to obtain permission to approach.

Q: If necessary, how do I contact either the PLGR or the cable lay vessel?

A: If it is necessary, please contact each vessel by name via the working channel 18. The PLGR vessel is the Megan Miller and the cable lay vessel is The Big Maxx. Since this is complex work and we are focused on delivering this effort safely and efficiently, we kindly ask for your cooperation to limit the number of calls to the vessels during active work periods.



Q: How do I pursue a claim during the project activities?

A: Please contact the National Grid project team at 401-515-4525 or 800-687-8906 or info@sea2shoreRI.com.

Q: Will any areas along the submarine cable be armored with articulated concrete matting and how will we be notified of areas where targeted burial depth was not achieved?

A: The jet plowing operation is expected to take approximately three weeks to complete. Per various permit conditions, TNEC is required to armor existing telecommunication cables and obtain advanced approval from federal or state agencies of additional concrete matting. TNEC will provide notification to the fisheries groups at this time.

Q: Will the submarine cable have effects on marine life due to EMF, noise, heat, etc.?

A: Studies have been conducted and provided to the permit agencies in advance of the project construction that examined possible EMF impacts of the submarine cable installation and operation. No quantifiable environmental or related impacts have been determined. TNEC continues to work with RI DEM on this topic.

Q: Will the project website be updated with greater specificity during the ongoing project operations?

A: We will regularly update the website and provide notifications and project updates to stakeholders as the project advances through the fisheries liaison. We continue to work with our contractors to revise the project schedule and will provide advance notice of project activities and any potential changes as they arise.