

For Immediate Release
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Oregon’s Seafood Industry, Tribes, and Coastal Communities Breathing Sigh of Relief

Coastal Oregonians received welcome news this morning that Oregon Governor Tina Kotek has recommended that the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) cancel the October 15th lease auction for floating offshore wind energy. Governor Kotek stressed in her statement that the “Oregon Way” must be adhered to, and the state’s Offshore Wind Roadmap must be completed, and impacts understood before any lease auction was to occur in the future.

“This is not only a huge relief to the fishing industry, but to all Oregonians who want to understand what the impacts from floating offshore wind energy development could be to the environment, fisheries, and coastal economies,” said Heather Mann, Executive Director of Midwater Trawlers Cooperative. “We are profoundly grateful for the responsible leadership that Governor Kotek is showing on this critically important issue. Together with support from Oregon’s Coastal Caucus and our congressional delegation, our representatives are working for us in an accountable and responsible way, and I can’t thank them enough for standing up and doing what’s right for Oregonians.”

“This is how we do things in Oregon,” said Nick Edwards, a fisherman from Coos Bay. “Some downplay or even criticize the Oregon Way,” he continued, “but the Oregon Way has time and time again been the bellwether for successful development in our State. After traveling to Scotland this summer with an Oregon delegation to learn more about offshore wind energy development impacts, I was convinced more than ever that BOEM was pushing Oregon too fast and not listening to the many concerns of Oregonians – now we know we can trust Governor Kotek and her administration to ensure our voices are heard.”

This welcome news comes after weeks of intensifying activity including litigation initiated by the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians against BOEM’s flawed process. “Chair Neaper and the Tribe’s courage to challenge BOEM has certainly changed the dynamic in Oregon,” Mann said. “Having Governor Kotek specifically refer to the divisiveness that BOEM has caused within collaborating groups, including the tribes, is especially important and frankly, rewarding.”

Lori Steele, Executive Director of the West Coast Seafood Processors Association welcomed the decision saying, “This move by Governor Kotek allows stakeholders to really focus on the Roadmap development. Without leases and survey activities occurring simultaneously we can really engage with the Roadmap and ensure people’s voices are heard and not simply steamrolled over by BOEM. Our huge thanks go to the Governor’s office as well as the Tribes – this is a historic day for Oregon!”

As we continue to learn more from around the country and world with regards to potential impacts from offshore wind development, Yelena Nowak, the Oregon Trawl Commission Director had this to say in response to this morning’s news, “Last night at a gathering in Newport, we heard from a visiting contingent of the provincial government in the Netherlands that due to offshore wind development they had lost many valuable fishing grounds and had to decommission a portion of their fishing fleet. This is a cautionary tale that offshore wind has many known and unknown risks and unintended consequences. We applaud Governor Kotek for her leadership, requesting BOEM to hold off with the lease sale in Oregon until the Roadmap is completed to allow our state to make well-informed decisions regarding this development.”

Contacts:

Heather Mann (541) 272-4544 heathermunromann@gmail.com

Nick Edwards (541) 290-5609 fisherman97420@hotmail.com

Lori Steele (503) 227-5076 lori.wcseafood@gmail.com

Yelena Nowak (541) 254-3055 yelena@ortrawl.org