

Congress of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20515

Amanda Lefton
Director
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM)
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

June 22, 2022

Dear Director Lefton,

We write to express our significant concerns about the siting process for floating offshore wind facilities in federal waters, especially the Calls for Information and Nominations (Calls) off the coast of Oregon, near Coos Bay and Brookings. We urge BOEM to take a thorough, systematic, fully-inclusive, and collaborative approach to ensure that economic, environmental, and safety impacts of floating offshore wind facilities in the Coos Bay and Brookings Call Areas are understood and mitigated before moving any further in the siting process. Specifically, we request that you complete a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for wind energy off the entire Pacific Coast, move the Oregon Call Areas to minimize impact on sustainable fishing operations, and formally consult with all relevant stakeholders in the full siting process.

The California Current, in the Pacific coastal waters, is a unique and exceptional ecosystem that provides immeasurable environmental and economic benefits to the region. It is critical to conduct a Programmatic EIS before continuing the current leasing process to evaluate the cumulative impact of all siting, design, and operation of energy projects on this rich and rare natural resource. It is short-sighted at best and negligent at worst to develop floating offshore wind projects along the Pacific coast piecemeal without studying and planning for the system as a whole. A thorough Programmatic EIS for floating offshore wind facilities off the entire Pacific coast is necessary to provide clarity on unanswered questions on this nascent technology, make informed choices about the best course of action (including considering a no action scenario), and develop mitigation strategies before it's too late to make meaningful adjustments.

Additionally, we urge you to move the Coos Bay and Brookings Call Areas beyond the 1300-meter depth in critical areas to minimize displacing current sustainable fishing activities to the greatest extent possible. The seafood industry is economically critical to Oregon as a whole, and especially Oregon's coastal communities. Coastal communities rely on the jobs and economic activity that come from the seafood industry, including sport and commercial fishermen, seafood processors, related marine user businesses, and many other jobs that come from that economic activity. Fishing grounds have been steadily shrinking for decades and coastal communities up and down the Pacific coast continue to suffer economic and cultural loss. Further limiting

Oregon's fishing industry from the productive fishing grounds in the current Call Areas could spell economic disaster for these towns that have relied on access to fish for generations.

We also call on BOEM to consult with all relevant stakeholders to fully evaluate the wide-ranging impacts of these proposed developments along the Pacific coast. Currently the BOEM Oregon Intergovernmental Energy Task Force is comprised exclusively of government employees, without industry and stakeholder representation, and closes official meetings before taking public comment. BOEM should revise this task force to include a range of relevant non-governmental stakeholders, such as the task forces within the Marine Fish Advisory Committee at National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Additionally, we request that BOEM consistently provide a publicly-accessible lay interpretation of scientific analysis throughout the process to help Oregonians better understand the complex issues at hand and BOEM's rationale for its siting decisions.

Finally, BOEM should fully coordinate with federal partners including NOAA, the Pacific Fisheries Management Council, and the United States Coast Guard to make sure the most relevant expertise is included in each step of the decision-making process. These agencies are well-versed in implementing federal law and have valuable insight into furthering science-based decision making, finding consensus among stakeholders, and ensuring navigational safety in federal waters. Although BOEM is charged with ocean energy management, federal partners need to be guaranteed input at the table.

Thank you for your work to move our country toward a renewable energy future. The federal government must lead the way to combat the climate crisis rapidly and aggressively. We appreciate that the Administration has prioritized deployment of offshore wind energy to achieve those goals, but we need an offshore wind strategy based in science and thoughtful planning that will ensure a basic level of economic security for the fishing industry and help protect ocean ecosystems.

Sincerely,



PETER A. DeFAZIO
Member of Congress



RON WYDEN
United States Senator