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Comment Received From: Amanda Peñasan Hickey
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Comment from the California Center for Rural Policy

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

8/18/2025

California Energy Commission
Docket No. 25-AB-03
715 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Submitted via electronic mail to docket@energ.ca.gov

RE: Assembly Bill 3, Report 2: In-State Assembly, Supply Chain, and Workforce Feasibility Scoping Document and Literature Assessment

Dear Chair Hochschild and Commissioners,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments regarding supply chain and workforce development related aspects of the nascent California Offshore Wind industry. The California Center for Rural Policy (CCRP) serves as the Regional Convener of the California Jobs First initiative for the Redwood Region. The determinative factors related to this Bill are at the crux of our Collaborative's work, however the views expressed here are solely those of the CCRP.

The Redwood Region's economic history has been characterized by dependence on extractive industries, namely timber, fisheries, mining, and most recently, cannabis. While these industries brought periods of economic activity, they also left lasting impacts on our environment, communities, and infrastructure. Local Tribal Nations, who have been stewards of this land since time immemorial, endured profound losses — including land dispossession and historical injustices — yet remain vital leaders in cultural and environmental preservation, and regional renewal. Today, the region stands at a pivotal moment: our communities are eager to address longstanding gaps in capacity, infrastructure, and services, and to ensure that future development includes strong safety guardrails and equitable benefits for all. With strategic investment and collaborative planning, we can turn past challenges into opportunities for sustainable and equitable growth, and environmental restoration.

The Redwood Region has taken the opportunity afforded by California Jobs First to create a shared vision and agenda for sustainable development. The resulting [Regional Roadmap](#) document, driven by the input of thousands of local leaders and residents representing 33 Tribal nations and our four county region, charts a path forward which supports the development of an offshore wind (OSW) industry in line with local community goals:

- Residents and leaders in the region view Offshore Wind as a key economic diversification strategy, alongside sectors like arts and culture, tourism, healthcare, working lands, and other blue economy industries. North Coast communities expect the industry to generate high-wage jobs and support the transition to a carbon-neutral economy.
- The RISE Regional Roadmap recognizes that OSW will require a skilled workforce in

construction, engineering, and marine industries. Workforce planning emphasizes preventing reliance on outside labor and instead training local workers so that wages circulate within the community.

To truly realize the potential of this industry and not repeat the mistakes of the past, our Regional Roadmap calls industry leaders to account for certain attributes of our region and workforce in their planning:

- Coordinate with our workforce development infrastructure, including our Worker Centers, Workforce Development Boards, Community Colleges, our four year university Cal Poly Humboldt, committed network of Community Based Organizations and healthcare providers (to name a few), in delivering trauma-informed workplaces and initiatives. The Redwood Region has a percentage of workers who have experienced trauma, disability, and previous disconnection from the labor market. We also possess resilient, adaptable, and capable workers ready for a rewarding career in a values-aligned industry.
- Seize opportunities to deliver on community needs, particularly wrap around services for job seekers and upskillers. The region is fortunate to possess good training programs and pathways into the trades, but community members need extra support to complete them and move into placement.

A successful approach to OSW development in California would recognize the northern coastline's value beyond its suitability as a site for development but also as a place with legacy industries that are still supporting local families (like commercial fishing), a place where investment and innovation in aquaculture is occurring, a shoreline that draws millions of visitors each year and as a marine ecosystem with social, cultural, and spiritual importance to our communities. To simultaneously hold these values and build the health of our communities, the Center supports the seven pillar approach put forward by collaborators the CORE hub:

1. **Tribal and Community Ownership**, to build regional wealth and enduring economic wellbeing.
2. **Regional Youth and Young Adult (16-25) Opportunities**, to uplift marginalized or at-risk populations as they enter/re-enter the workforce and to strengthen the region's trajectory.
3. **Training, Education, Certification, and Learning Support Systems**, to meet the specific needs of the Region's remote, underserved, low-income populations it is essential to engage early and intentionally with the region's education institutions which will be best positioned to support the training needs to come.
4. **Innovative Financing and Funding Partnerships**, to facilitate fair local participation in a globally competitive market, new investing avenues must be opened to capitalize local and Tribal ventures, to reduce risks for first-time local entrepreneurs and their investing partners, and create access to new ways for the region to secure financing, both public and private, to support OSW industry supply chains.
5. **Public Investments in Regional Infrastructure**, to reduce burden and risk for siting OSW industry and economic activities, prerequisite investments in long-overdue infrastructure systems will be required. In particular, equitable and resilient energy transmission and distribution, affordable and low-income housing, water treatment systems, roadway upgrades, health and child care systems, and region-wide access to reliable, and high-speed internet.
6. **Public Policies that Preference Host Regions and Tribal Nations**, to level the economic playing field will require closely partnering with the State of California to set smart, equitable and fair public policies as new industry is chartered, as underscored by the [*Roosevelt Institute*](#).
7. **Enforceable Structures that Prioritize Safety and Mitigate Harm**, to ensure long-term security and stewardship of the Region's residents and ecosystems.

Additionally, the CCRP supports the following CORE Hub recommendations:

1. **Support Regionally-Led Expertise and Priorities:** Many institutions, authorities, and leaders have undertaken research, regional assessments, and deeply engaged with community members. The CEC should prioritize these findings and goals in their work.
2. **Participate In-Person with Communities on CEC-Identified Gaps and a Learning Agenda.** It is critical for the success of this work to co-design and participate in local activities and engagements with Tribes and community-based organizations. This will generate new insights and stimulate solutions crucial for the CEC specific gaps it is required to evaluate and include in its final report, including “(9) *Develop recommendations for incorporating equity and environmental justice in economically and environmentally sustainable supply chain development.* (10) *Coordinate with tribal governments to develop recommendations for tribal workforce development opportunities* (11) *Consult with environmental and environmental justice groups, fisheries groups, labor unions, including manufacturing, transportation, maritime, and longshore unions, oceangoing vessel operators, the commercial maritime industry, public port authorities, and business groups to develop recommendations for workforce development opportunities* (12) *Develop recommendations for workforce development investments at community colleges, by the California Workforce Development Board for maritime and longshore workforces, at state universities, and in apprenticeship programs necessary to meet the workforce needs resulting from the in-state targets described in this section.* (13) *Consult with building and construction trades councils to develop recommendations on the use of project labor agreements to achieve workforce development and apprenticeship goals.*”

Conclusion

Offshore wind in Humboldt Bay and the Redwood Region is positioned as a transformative clean energy sector, with high potential for job creation, climate resilience, and regional economic growth. The Redwood Region’s communities stress the importance of local workforce training, community benefit agreements, and balancing impacts on existing Blue Economy industries like fisheries and aquaculture in order for the industry to remain in alignment with local self determination and development aspirations. We are grateful to the CEC for this opportunity to provide feedback in accordance with AB525, and hope that the work being done by the CORE hub, the RISE Collaborative, and Tribes and jurisdictions across our region who have profound commitment to just climate transitions and environmental sustainability, will continue to have a voice in shaping this industry as it develops.

Sincerely,



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