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**Sperra Comment EPIC 2026â€“2030 Research Priorities - Offshore
Wind, Port Infrastructure, and Canal Solar**

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

Sperra

Public Comment — CEC EPIC Investment Plan Implementation, Docket No. 25-EPIC-01

Submitted by Jason Cotrell, Founder & CEO | jason.cotrell@sperra.com | June 18, 2026

Introduction

On behalf of Sperra, I am pleased to submit comments on the California Energy Commission's implementation of the next EPIC Investment Plan covering 2026–2030. Sperra is a California based company pioneering **Marine Infrastructure On Demand™** to accelerate deployment of offshore wind and other renewable energy technologies. We have been part of the EPIC-funded ecosystem since our founding in 2017, when we received our first grant from CEC which helped us start our business. Over the past eight years, that foundational support helped us grow to 12 full-time employees with over 100 years of combined engineering experience, develop 11 clean energy products, secure nearly \$20 million in non-EPIC grant funding, and begin expanding internationally. None of that trajectory would have been possible without CalSEED and the broader EPIC ecosystem.

Targeted Research Priorities: Offshore Wind, Port Infrastructure, and Canal Solar

Sperra respectfully urges the CEC to include explicit, targeted funding for three interconnected research areas in the 2026–2030 Investment Plan that are currently underrepresented in CEC programming:

- Offshore wind foundation and anchor infrastructure. California's floating offshore wind targets require domestically manufactured concrete foundations and anchors that reduce cost, embodied carbon, and supply chain risk. Sperra's Floating Construction Station™ (FCS) — currently being advanced through NOWRDC and The Crown Estate's Supply Chain Accelerator in the UK — is designed to fabricate and launch these systems from California ports. Our logistics analysis, conducted with Manson Construction, found that FCS can increase turbine throughput at Pier Wind from 51 to 108 turbines by 2035 and reduce per-foundation marine logistics costs by \$400,000–\$500,000. CEC-funded R&D is essential to move this from funded engineering to California port adoption.
- Port development for offshore wind manufacturing. California needs not only a staging and integration terminal but a statewide port strategy that enables multiple ports — Los Angeles, Long Beach, Humboldt Bay, San Diego, San Francisco — to participate in offshore wind supply chain development. Targeted EPIC funding for port planning, CEQA review, and pilot demonstration of modular manufacturing systems would allow smaller ports and innovative small businesses to contribute meaningfully to offshore wind deployment without being crowded out by large fixed-infrastructure projects alone.
- Canal solar and co-located clean energy infrastructure. California's canal system represents a largely untapped opportunity to generate solar energy, conserve water, and reduce land use simultaneously. Sperra has developed 3D-printed canal solar canopy systems and submitted a research concept to EPIC 5 demonstrating that canal solar paired with co-located flexible load — such as a data center — can reduce grid congestion, lower ratepayer electricity costs, and eliminate evaporative water loss. Dedicated CEC funding for canal solar R&D and pilot demonstration would unlock this opportunity at scale.

We note with concern that the current direction of the next Investment Plan does not appear to include sustained funding for utility-scale offshore renewable energy or in-front-of-the-meter infrastructure innovation. We understand that near-term ratepayer affordability is a dominant concern — and we share it, as our manufacturing approach reduces costs 20–80% compared to conventional steel alternatives.

But deferring foundational R&D on the infrastructure California will need over the next decade will ultimately cost ratepayers more. These technologies require long development cycles, and the window to build California-based domestic capability is now.

Program Structures That Work for Hardware Companies

Sperra's growth has depended on milestone-based early-stage programs that meet hardware companies where they are. We specifically urge CEC to sustain and expand:

- CalSEED — for pre-commercial validation of novel clean energy hardware, particularly for technologies with long development timelines and high prototype costs such as marine and offshore systems.
- STEP and RAMP — for bridge funding that allows companies to sustain momentum between grant cycles and prepare for private capital. Without these programs, deep-tech hardware companies face existential funding gaps that no private investor will fill at early stage.
- CalTestBed — for physical validation infrastructure. Sperra plans to use CalTestBed within the next two years to validate our anchor systems for floating offshore wind and canal solar technologies. Access to credible third-party testing is essential for both bankability and regulatory acceptance.

We also encourage CEC to minimize cost-share requirements for solicitations where small businesses are the primary technology developer. High cost-share thresholds unintentionally favor large incumbents and reduce participation by the companies most capable of delivering lower-cost, innovative solutions.

Conclusion

The EPIC ecosystem — CalSEED, STEP, RAMP, CalTestBed, and REICs — has been foundational to Sperra's development and to the broader California clean energy innovation pipeline. We urge the CEC to sustain these programs in EPIC 5 and to explicitly include targeted research priorities for offshore wind infrastructure, California port development, and canal solar in the 2026–2030 Investment Plan. These are not long-shot bets — they are near-term needs for a state that has committed to floating offshore wind, grid reliability, and ratepayer affordability simultaneously.

We appreciate the CEC's continued leadership and welcome any opportunity to provide further technical input.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Cotrell, MSME, MBA

Founder & CEO, Sperra (RCAM Technologies, Inc.)

jason.cotrell@sperra.com | +1 (303) 886-8937 | sperra.com