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Additional Considerations for Offshore Wind off of the Central Coast of California

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

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STEWARDS OF THE FISHERI

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September 30, 2020

Karen Douglas, Commissioner C/O the California Energy Commission Docket Unit, MS-4 Re: Docket No. 17-MISC-01 1516 Ninth Street Sacramento, CA 95814-5512

Re: PCFFA & IFR Comments re Notice of Availability of Outreach on Additional Considerations for Offshore Wind Energy off the Central Coast of California; Docket No. 17-MISC-01

Dear Commissioner Douglas,

Thank you for the opportunity offer the following comments on the UPDATED Notice of Availability of Outreach on Additional Considerations for Offshore Wind Energy off the Central Coast of California (Updated Notice). PCFFA, and a number of other fishing industry organizations, submitted detailed comments in January of 2019 in response to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's (BOEM) October, 2018 Call for Information and Nominations for Commercial Leasing for Wind Power Development on the OCS offshore California. In those comments we highlighted "the importance of these call areas to the concerns raised in those comments are equally applicable today; and to the additional areas under consideration in the Updated Notice, we incorporate them by reference and include that letter as an attachment to these comments. We provide additional comments to address concerns or additional considerations that have arisen or taken a new priority since January of 2019.

PCFFA is the largest organization of commercial fishermen and women (harvesters) on the West Coast. For forty years, we have been leading the industry in assuring the rights of individual harvesters and fighting for the long-term survival of commercial fishing as a

productive livelihood and way of life. PCFFA represents local fishermen's associations on the West Coast from Santa Barbara to the Canadian border. PCFFA harvesters fish in areas contemplated by Call Areas. Based on local experience, our members perceive it likely that poorly planned and ill-sited offshore wind activities in either Call Area will impact their ability to engage in those fisheries.

At the outset, we wish to express our appreciation for recent efforts by the CEC and Ocean Protection Council (OPC) to engage the commercial and recreational fishing communities. The webinars which took place on September 23rd and 25th provided the first opportunity for many attendees to hear about efforts taking place off the Central California Coast. More than one attendee expressed surprise and concern over the amount and level of planning which has taken place without any serious involvement by the fishing community. We hope this effort by state and federal agencies, to more actively and transparently involve our industry in decision-making processes, is not short-lived.

We also wish to offer our support for comments raised by other fishing industry groups, the Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries in particular, and those submitted by both the Pacific Fishery Management Council and the Responsible Offshore Development Alliance. We note that many other commenters have opined that the planning processes need to be more deliberate and the potential costs (both economic and other) better understood.

Additional considerations subsequent to our January 2019 comment

Department of Defense (DOD) input and subsequent redesign of the Morro Bay Call Area

On February 7, 2020 the CEC first published its Notice of Availability "Outreach on Additional Considerations for Offshore Wind off the Central Coast of California" Docket 17-MISC-01. In that document, we learned the following:

- The DOD deemed **both** of the original Call Areas as "incompatible with the wide array of critical DOD activities." In effect, these areas were off the table.
- Beginning in August of 2019, a smaller group comprised of Congressman Carbajal, Congressman Panetta, DOD, BOEM, NOAA Sanctuaries, and the State of California" met numerous times and eventually "identified areas [proximate to and within] the Morro Bay Call Area that may be compatible with DOD operations."

On March 9, 2020 the BOEM-California Intergovernmental Task Force met and initiated a process to receive input on the North and South areas from local, state, and federal agencies, tribal governments, stakeholders, and the public.

COVID-19, shelter-in-place orders, and threats to our national food security

In January, COVID-19 began to impact California's commercial harvesters as export markets were shut down. On March 19, Governor Newsom issued a shelter-in-place order. In effect, all non-essential services were ordered to shut down. California's commercial harvesters were

deemed essential workers and continued to provide seafood to a scared citizenry. When pork, beef and chicken processing plants had to shutter due to COVID, California's commercial harvesters stood at the ready to provide a healthy and sustainably sourced protein for the state's and nation's seafood consumers. When restaurants closed, California's commercial harvesters adapted their business models to deliver fresh fish to the doorsteps of Californians. Due to the disruption of global supply chains, our nation's food security was put at risk. Planning activities need to consider national food security.

Announcement of a potential offshore wind demo project in State waters

On June 2, 2020 fishing interests in Santa Barbara, Morro Bay and Port San Luis were contacted by Cierco Corporation about the CADEMO project, a proposed floating offshore wind demonstration project located in State waters offshore of Vandenberg Air Force Base near Lompoc, CA. Cierco is the sponsor of the CADEMO project. The State Lands Commission will be the primary permitting agency.

This raises two points of concern:

- 1. Confusion about which state agencies play a role in the offshore wind process. During the Sept 23rd and 25th webinars, we learned that the California Energy Commission, State Lands Commission, Coastal Commission and Ocean Protection Council will all play a role in the offshore wind process. We believe that all stakeholders would benefit from having clarity regarding the role of each in the offshore wind process.
- 2. The relative close proximity to the Morro Bay Call Area. This highlights the need to consider and evaluate the cumulative impacts of offshore development projects. Commercial harvesters from Morro Bay and Port San Luis are now facing the loss of two important areas to their livelihoods. Additionally. impacts to dependent businesses, such as ice houses, fuel docks, offloading stations, fish buyers and processors, etc., need to be fully understand and accounted for.

Fishery management challenges

COVID-19 continues to pose challenges to fisheries management. In person meetings are now conducted by webinars. Data collected and used in fisheries management will surely be impacted, with some fisheries being more adversely affected than others. These are challenges that will have to addressed and overcome.

Offshore wind facilities will also pose challenges to our fisheries management. We noted in our January 2019 letter impacts to fishery science surveys, which are the foundations for stock assessments – upon which scientifically based catch limits are derived. We are also concerned about impacts of electromagnetic fields (EMFs) on fish stocks, crustaceans, cephalopods, marine mammals and sea turtles.

This summer the California Department of Fish and Wildlife issued proposed regulations implementing the Risk Assessment and Mitigation Program (RAMP). The regulatory package will govern entanglements in fishing gear the State's Dungeness Crab fishery, which is often the most valuable fishery in the State. Under these regulations, entanglements with Blue Whales, Humpback Whales, and Pacific Leatherback Sea Turtles could result in the closure of the fishery. The number of allowed interactions is informed by a number of risk factors, including but not limited to marine life concentrations. Marine life concentrations, are in turn, analyzed by considering historic marine life migration patterns, fishing season dynamics (which looks at geographic location of fishing effort, amount of fishing gear deployed in a Fishing Zone), and other metrics. In 2019, 87,852 lbs of Dungeness Crab were landed into Morro Bay with an exvessel¹ value of \$411,309². Another 35,036 lbs worth \$160,762 were landed into Port San Luis³. For each of these locations, that fishery was the third most value in terms of revenues. It bears noting the Crab fishery closed three months in 2019. In 2018, 117,336 lbs of Dungeness Crab were landed into Morro Bay with an ex-vessel value of \$ \$669,860⁴. Another 51,138 lbs worth \$ 286,222 were landed into Port San Luis⁵. For Morro Bay, this was the second most valuable fishery in 2018; and for Port San Luis, the most valuable.

How offshore wind facilities, and associated transmission lines, impact marine mammal and sea turtle movements and behaviors will need to be better understood.

Lack of data on socio-economic and societal impacts

As shown above, it is fairly easy to estimate ex-vessel revenues. What is more difficult to ascertain is the downstream impacts of those revenues. For example, what is the actual value of a pound of Dungeness Crab to the Morro Bay and Port San Luis economy? Without a clear understanding of the downstream impacts, it will be difficult to estimate total losses to the local economies.

The Morro Bay website states, "As a community, Morro Bay was built on the commercial fishing industry and still leads the way in sustainable fishing practices. You can get involved by enjoying the catch of the day at one of our local restaurants or try your own hand at luring in the local seafood on a local fishing charter.⁶" Commercial fishing is embedded in the fabric of the community and it's working waterfront is an attraction. How will a large-scale commercial offshore wind industry change the character of Morro Bay and will tourist dollars still come to the working waterfront if the fishing industry is displaced? It is beyond dispute that visitors enjoy watching commercial fishing catches being offloaded, gear being worked on, and the excitement that precedes a vessel's departure.

¹ Ex-vessel revenue is the amount paid to the commercial harvester for their catch.

² California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Table 21MBPUB - Poundage and Value of Commercial Landings by Port MORRO BAY Area – 2019 See - <u>https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=178035&inline</u> ³ ibid

⁴ California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Table 21MBPUB - Poundage and Value of Commercial Landings by Port MORRO BAY Area During 2018 See - <u>https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=171084&inline</u> ⁵ ibid

⁶ See - <u>https://www.morrobay.org/things-to-do/outdoors/fishing/</u>

In conclusion, we are not opposed to the concept of offshore renewable energy projects. What we are opposed to is maintenance of the status quo in terms of planning and siting in which certain industries are excluded or underrepresented in the process. To the extent possible, conflicts (both direct and indirect) should be avoided. For conflicts that cannot be avoided, they should be minimized to the extent practicable. For those minimized conflicts that cannot be avoided, mitigation measures need to be crafted to compensate for impacts to effected parties and industries. We strongly believe a mitigation framework needs to be considered and developed at the outset (ie. before leasing decisions are made) and done so with strong input and guidance from the fishing industry and community, including those based in and around the Call Areas and those fishermen/fisheries that opportunistically fish and/or berth in those Ports and Harbors. We remain available to work with all parties during all phases of the process.

California's commercial fishermen and women rose to the occasion for Californians during the Pandemic. We are asking you to do the same for us.

Thank you.

MK/8

Michael Conroy, Executive Director PCFFA and IFR mike@ifrfish.org

cc: Eli Harland Chris Potter Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations • Institute for Fisheries Resources • Humboldt Fishermen's Marketing Association • California Wetfish Producers Association • West Coast Fisheries Consultants • Western Fishboat Owners' Association • American Fisherman's Research Foundation • Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries • Fishermen's Marketing Association • Oregon Trawl Commission • Midwater Trawlers Cooperative • West Coast Pelagic Conservation Group • West Coast Seafood Processors Association • Ventura County Commercial Fishermen's Association • Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara • California Fisheries and Seafood Institute • Responsible Offshore Development Alliance

January 28, 2019

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management Office of Strategic Resources 760 Paseo Camarillo (Suite 102) Camarillo, California 93010

Submitted online at Docket No. BOEM-2018-0045 at http://regulations.gov

RE: Docket No. BOEM-2018-0045

To whom it may concern:

We the undersigned understand that the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) is soliciting information and nominations regarding three 'call areas' that your agency has deemed suitable for wind energy development in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone off the coast of California. We are pleased to provide comments on these areas and appreciate the opportunity provided by BOEM to highlight the importance of these call areas to the commercial seafood industry and fishing-dependent communities of the West Coast.

We urge BOEM to ensure that one renewable industry is not supplanted for another – we are determined to harvest, and supply to the nation, sustainable seafood for generations to come and urge you to comprehensively assess impacts of proposed wind energy development to our industry as soon as possible.

The potential impacts to the fishing industry resulting from the development of the proposed call areas are numerous and significant, requiring a thorough and in-depth analysis. The loss of 1,073 square miles of fishing grounds would have devastating impacts to the fishing communities for whom those seemingly small areas represent a large portion of their most accessible and productive fishing grounds. As offshore wind energy is a new industry and the floating power generating structures proposed for the application your are considering are a new technology, a precautionary approach to wind energy area scoping, designation, leasing, and permitting should be taken with respect to impacts to fisheries, dependent fishing communities, and the marine and coastal environment.

BOEM is required to consider the impacts of its activities to commercial fisheries and coastal communities. The Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCSLA) § 388⁷ explicitly requires the consideration of impacts to fisheries and the mitigation of interference when leasing submerged lands to wind power: "The Secretary shall ensure that any activity under this subsection is carried out in a manner that provides for:

- "prevention of interference with reasonable uses (as determined by the Secretary) of the exclusive economic zone, the high seas, and the territorial seas"; and
- "consideration of any other use of the sea or seabed, including use for a fishery".

Section $18(a)(1)^8$ of the OCLSA requires BOEM to consider the impacts projects will have to our industry, to the environmental resources we rely on, and to the communities we are a part of. This section requires that "management of the outer Continental Shelf shall be conducted in a manner which considers economic, social, and environmental values of the renewable and nonrenewable resources contained in the outer Continental Shelf, and the potential impact of oil and gas exploration on other resource values of the outer Continental Shelf and the marine, coastal, and human environments."

We believe BOEM is statutorily obligated to fully evaluate all economic, social, and environmental impacts to commercial fishing activity resulting from wind energy leasing in full compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the OCSLA, and that it will be required to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) documenting impacts to the human environment and natural resources of commercial fisheries. An EIS is required when considering "major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment" (NEPA § $102(2)(C)^9$). The human environment "shall be interpreted comprehensively to include the natural and physical environment and the relationship of people with that environment... When an environmental impact statement is prepared and economic or social and natural or physical environmental effects are interrelated, then the environmental impact statement will discuss all of these effects on the human environment." (40 CFR § 1508.14).

These effects may be direct, indirect, or cumulative. 40 CFR §§ 1502.16, 1508.7, 1508.8. Direct effects are those "which are caused by the action and occur at the same time and place." 40 C.F.R. § 1508.8(a). Indirect effects are those "which are caused by the action and are later in time and farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect effects may include growth inducing effects and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density or growth rate, and related effects on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems." 40 C.F.R. § 1508.8(b). A cumulative impact is "the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time." 40 C.F.R. § 1508.7.

⁷ See - 43 U.S.C. §1337

⁸ See - 43 U.S.C. §1344(a)(1)

⁹ See – 42 U.S.C. §4332(2)(C)

Our fishing communities have already lost thousands of square miles of fishing grounds to various types of fishing closures and restrictions, including but not limited to Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), marine mammal and turtle conservation areas, general and gear/stock-specific habitat restrictions, cable areas, and shipping channels. Some of these closures have been adequately mitigated, while others have not. Additional losses of fishing grounds will have significant cumulative impacts on fishing effort, catch, and the value of our industry. Such losses will also have consequent multiplied impacts on the fishing communities and allied industries that we serve.

We urge your careful and thorough consideration of how wind energy development projects will impact fisheries. Several commercially harvested stocks occurring in or near the proposed call areas for which effort has been limited for many years are in the process of being rebuilt or will soon be rebuilt. Several others have been limited because of constraints based on gear type rather than stock abundance. BOEM's close coordination with our industry and fishery management agencies will be required in order to properly scope future impacts of proposed wind energy projects.

We also urge your careful consideration of how project construction, installation, staging, and maintenance operations will interfere with fishing operations. This consideration should include maritime operations, loss of shoreside infrastructure and commercial fishing space, transit and safety needs of fishing vessels, and increased vessel traffic in and around ports associated with proposed projects. We will also seek assurances that wind energy companies will take full responsibility for complete decommissioning at the end of the lifespan of their facilities or termination of a lease as a leasing condition.

Your agency's full consideration of the extraordinarily complex landscape of the human environment of commercial fisheries must begin now – at the siting stage – and not be delayed until a stage in which only minor accommodations can be made, in order to ensure compatibility with commercial fisheries without the loss of massive investments on the part of the offshore wind energy companies and the federal government. At these later stages it will be too late for meaningful stakeholder input, and mistakes may have been made that would have been relatively simple (and inexpensive) to correct had the leasing process been approached holistically at an early stage.

Excluding nearshore areas in part due to high fishing activity is a proactive step that may lessen impacts, but we do not feel this consideration alone is adequate. Focusing on nearshore areas is an oversimplification of where valuable fishing occurs. While for some fisheries the nearshore areas are more essential, other fisheries primarily rely on fishing grounds farther offshore. Furthermore, it is reasonably foreseeable that BOEM's leasing and permitting activities will result in hazards to navigation and the establishment of restricted areas near and around cable areas and the placement of cables within nearshore fishing grounds, significantly affecting commercial fisheries.

We disagree with BOEM's assertion that it has chosen call areas that are not high value fishing grounds. As seafood industry organizations and businesses, we are aware the proposed wind energy areas are situated within productive fishing grounds, constituting an important part of the

'human environment' of the coast of California. Our respective organizations and businesses rely on these areas to harvest seafood and generate revenue; and provide a healthy and sustainable source of protein for seafood consumers in the U.S.

As you know, BOEM has not adequately undertaken scoping activities that would enable it to characterize the nature, extent, and value of fishing activities occurring within or in close proximity to the call areas. We are unable to provide information at a high enough resolution to inform your scoping process because, for many fisheries, this information does not exist or is restricted from dissemination based on the State's data reporting and/or confidentiality requirements. We encourage you to consult with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, in addition to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and fishing communities, to determine the scope, extent, and value of fisheries permitted by those agencies that are prosecuted within these proposed call areas.

As this is the first time these agencies and the fishing industry are being requested to provide this type of information, much of its collection and analysis will require novel approaches that will take a significant amount of time to develop, peer review, and groundtruth. We request that you begin this process now. Under BOEM's accelerated environmental review process pursuant to Executive Order 13807 § 4(a)(i)(B) (Aug. 15, 2017), failure to initiate these inquiries until after a lease is issued will not leave sufficient time to fully inform the agency and developer of fisheries considerations until all major decisions regarding siting, design, and operations have been made.

The designation of wind energy areas will also impact fishery science surveys and management that both enable and constrain commercial fisheries. BOEM's call areas are situated in and/or enclose essential fish habitat (EFH) and habitat areas of particular concern (HAPC) for commercially important fish and shellfish species. They are also situated within established or proposed critical habitat areas for several species listed under the federal Endangered Species Act that necessarily effect commercial fisheries, impacts to which could further constrain the prosecution of commercial fisheries in the call areas and in fishing industry sectors as far away as the Bering Sea. Additionally, seasonal acoustic and trawl surveys that inform fishery management on the West Coast occur within the proposed wind energy areas and can be reasonably expected to be displaced by call area designation and leasing/permitting activities. The acoustic and trawl surveys provide critical information to several fishery stock assessments and depend on a randomized sampling model for statistical precision. If these areas cannot be surveyed it will result in greater scientific uncertainty in fisheries management decisions, which could have the effect of decreasing allowable catch levels stock-wide.

Furthermore, BOEM should keep in mind the most current fishing regulations and update its databases to recognize recent changes. For example, the most recent commercial fishing dataset included in BOEM's collection of maps¹⁰ include industry activity from 2015 and before. More than three years of data makes a lot of difference. For example, the Pacific Fishery Management Council and NMFS have updated the Rockfish Conservation Areas for the trawl fleet and are

¹⁰ <u>https://databasin.org/galleries/ae21ddeb4fd642f1a382f96adc898dbe</u>

comprehensively revising the EFH areas. BOEM would be remiss to depend on outdated data for potential siting of wind energy projects.

We urge BOEM to work with members of our industry, state and federal fishery managers, and fishing communities to develop and implement approaches that can adequately define, characterize and scope the cumulative socioeconomic impacts of wind energy projects in California. These impacts should be comprehensive with respect to the harvested species that occur, and gear types that are used, both in these proposed call areas and along cable transmission lanes proposed to deliver energy from offshore to the mainland. A list of the harvested species and gear types that can be reasonably expected to occur or be used within the proposed call areas, including impacted nearshore areas, can be found in the Appendix to this letter. Impacts to each of these fisheries and gear types should be considered by BOEM.

Properly scoped, sited, and mitigated wind energy areas may be able to adequately address the needs and concerns of the seafood industry and coexist with the human environment of the West Coast commercial seafood industry. However, comprehensive assessment of all reasonably foreseeable impacts of call area designation, including the displacement of commercial fishing activity and associated impacts to dependent fishing communities, and the early implementation of the NEPA process, will ensure that you are able to make informed decisions about how to proceed in considering the development of wind energy projects in fishing grounds that we and our members have fished for generations.

Sincerely,

Noah Oppenheim Executive Director Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations & Institute for Fisheries Resources

Harrison Ibach President Humboldt Fishermen's Marketing Association

Diane Pleschner-Steele Executive Director California Wetfish Producers Association

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Chris Williams President Ventura County Commercial Fishermen's Association

Kim Selkoe Executive Director Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara

Rob Ross Executive Director California Fisheries and Seafood Institute

Annie Hawkins Executive Director Responsible Offshore Development Alliance

Appendix

List of Species Fished Within Call Areas and Associated Transmission Lines

Chinook Salmon - Oncorhynchus tshawytscha Dungeness Crab - Metacarcinus magister North Pacific Albacore - Thunnus alalunga Pink Shrimp - Pandalus borealis Spot Prawn - Pandalus platyceros Market Squid - Doryteuthis opalescens Pacific Sardine - Sardinops sagax Northern Anchovy - Engraulis mordax Pacific Mackerel - Scomber japonicus Jack Mackerel - Trachurus symmetricus Pacific Bonito - Sarda chiliensis California Halibut - Paralichthys californicus Swordfish - Xiphias gladius Common Thresher Shark - Alopias vulpinus Shortfin Mako Shark - Isurus oxvrinchus White Seabass - Atractoscion nobilis Sablefish - Anoplopoma fimbria Hagfish - Eptatretus stoutii Lingcod - Ophiodon elongatus Longnose Skate - Beringraja binoculata Night Smelt - Spirinchus starksi Kellet's Whelk - Kelletia kelletii Pacific Sanddab - Citharichthys sordidus Cabezon - Scorpaenichthys marmoratus Petrale Sole - Eopsetta jordani Dover Sole - Microstomus pacificus English Sole - Parophrys vetulus Rex Sole - *Glvptocephalus zachirus* Longspine Thornyhead - Sebastolobus altivelis Shortspine Thornyhead - Sebastolobus alascanus Arrowtooth Flounder - Atheresthes stomias Grenadier - Coryphaenoides acrolepis Black Rockfish - Sebastes melanops Blue Rockfish - Sebastes mystinus Bocaccio Rockfish - Sebastes paucispinis Canary Rockfish - Sebastes pinniger Widow Rockfish - Sebastes entomelas Yellowtail Rockfish - Sebastes flavidus Vermilion Rockfish - Sebastes miniatus Chilipepper Rockfish - Sebastes goodei Copper Rockfish - Sebastes caurinus Darkblotched Rockfish - Sebastes crameri Quillback Rockfish - Sebastes maliger Gopher Rockfish - Sebastes carnatus

Grass Rockfish *- Sebastes rastrelliger* Shelf Rockfish Group *- Genus Sebastes* Slope Rockfish Group *- Genus Sebastes*

List of Gear Types Fished Within Call Areas and Associated Transmission Lines Troll Pole and Line Pot Trap Jig Trawl Longline Purse Seine Drum Seine Brail Drift Gillnet

Set Gillnet