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**County of San Luis Obispo comment on preliminary assessment of  
OSW economic benefits and permitting roadmap**

*Additional submitted attachment is included below.*



**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE**

*Wade Horton County Administrative Officer*

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February 8, 2023

California Energy Commission  
715 P Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Docket No. 17-MISC-01**

**Subject: Comments on the “Draft Assembly Bill 525 Report: Preliminary Assessment of the Economic Benefits of Offshore Wind Related to Seaport Investments and Workforce Development Needs and Standards” and the “Draft Assembly Bill 525 Report: Developing a Permitting Roadmap for Offshore Wind Energy Development off the Coast of California”**

Dear California Energy Commission,

The County of San Luis Obispo appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the California Energy Commission’s (CEC) preliminary assessments related to the both the economic benefits of offshore wind (OSW) and the permitting roadmap as presented at its workshops on December 19, 2022. The County seeks to ensure that OSW development is compatible with our goal of ensuring our community is safe, healthy, livable, prosperous, and well-governed.

In June 2021, the County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution<sup>1</sup> stating its support for federal and state initiatives aimed at developing wind, energy storage, and other forms of renewable energy. In alignment with this resolution, the County welcomes working with OSW stakeholders—including federal, state, and local government agencies, developers, and community members—to bring this opportunity to fruition. We recognize the significance of being the host community for one of two California Wind Energy Areas (WEAs) and are ready to engage in the responsible development of wind energy resources.

**Comments on the Preliminary Assessment of the Economic Benefits of Offshore Wind Related to Seaport Investments and Workforce Development Needs and Standards**

The County has more than a century of experience producing energy, including oil and gas extraction and natural gas, nuclear, and solar power generation. The County currently hosts 2.2 gigawatts of carbon-free, base load energy generation at Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant,

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<sup>1</sup> County of San Luis Obispo Board of Supervisors. (2021, June). Resolution Recognizing the Potential of Renewable Wind Power Generation For, and Clean Energy Infrastructure, as Long-Term Economic Benefits to San Luis Obispo County. (Resolution No. 2021-134). Retrieved July 14, 2022, from <https://agenda.slocounty.ca.gov/iip/sanluisobispo/file/getfile/133808>.

which represents nearly 10% of the state's energy portfolio.<sup>2</sup> The County also hosts 800 megawatts of utility scale solar generation. As we look to offshore wind development, we are committed to continuing our legacy as one of California's vital power-generating counties.

The County recognizes the development of a new clean energy industry on our coastline has the potential to be transformational, which is why we are making financial investments now in determining how we can prepare for and harness the potential benefits. The County contributed funding to a pre-feasibility study<sup>3</sup> published in December 2022 by REACH, our regional economic development organization, that assessed waterfront infrastructure options including siting and redevelopment/upgrade possibilities to support the offshore wind industry. This study's relevance is supported by the note in the CEC preliminary assessment on page 27 that "the ideal ports to serve California's offshore wind industry will be located close to lease areas to reduce transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions, risk and costs." With additional state funding, the County hopes to continue studying options for offshore wind infrastructure in our region.

Given our energy-producing history, our local workforce is well-versed in transitioning from one energy frontier to the next. Our talent pool is fed by top universities and community colleges, strong K-12 schools, and innovative apprenticeship programs. We encourage the state agencies to work closely with our region's network of government agencies, economic developers, educational institutions, workforce development organizations, labor, community groups, and businesses to develop programs to ensure generational job stability and economic growth.

The County highlights these activities as examples of our commitments to helping the state and federal governments achieve their ambitious energy goals and fostering a welcoming environment for investment. This commitment is also expressed in the open letter<sup>4</sup> to the provisional winners of the recent BOEM auction signed by the County as well as a variety of other regional government, educational, and civic leaders.

### **Comments on the Draft Assembly Bill 525 Report: Developing a Permitting Roadmap for Offshore Wind Energy Development off the Coast of California**

While the state and federal agencies will lead the OSW permitting efforts as described in the permitting roadmap, the County supports the CEC's efforts to ensure local governments are engaged throughout the process. The County stands ready to be involved in the development of the memoranda of understanding/agreement and coordination plans, as appropriate and

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<sup>2</sup> Pacific Gas & Electric. (2022). *Diablo Canyon Power Plant*. About the Diablo Canyon Power Plant. Retrieved July 14, 2022, from [https://www.pge.com/en\\_US/safety/how-the-system-works/diablo-canyon-power-plant/about-the-diablo-canyon-power-plant.page](https://www.pge.com/en_US/safety/how-the-system-works/diablo-canyon-power-plant/about-the-diablo-canyon-power-plant.page).

<sup>3</sup> Porter, A., & Gostic, M. (2022). "Central Coast Emerging Industries Waterfront Siting and Infrastructure Study." Mott MacDonald in cooperation with REACH. <https://reachcentralcoast.org/wp-content/uploads/Waterfront-Infrastructure-Report-121522.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> "Community commitment to collaborate to advance offshore wind on the Central Coast of California." December 27, 2022. <https://reachcentralcoast.org/offshore-wind-support-letter/>

relevant, that are described on page 16 of the draft conceptual permitting roadmap. The County would also make the appropriate staff and principals available to participate in the interagency coordination working groups that are mentioned in the draft. The County currently participates in the BOEM California Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Taskforce.

As we look to the permitting processes that are likely to occur across San Luis Obispo County to support OSW development, we anticipate that there will be a need for additional resources and staffing at County planning and permitting offices. On page 14 of the draft conceptual permitting roadmap in a discussion regarding the state agencies involved in permitting, it states that "an underlying assumption of the conceptual permitting roadmap is that there will be funding allocated to support agency implementation." The County would like to encourage the state to consider funding to support local agencies with permitting implementation as well as the state agencies.

The County appreciates the CEC's time in reviewing these comments and the work that is underway to create a new clean energy industry and workforce in California.

Sincerely,



Wade Horton  
County Administrative Officer