

DOCKETED

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comments on OSW seascape planning and impacts to fishermen

see attached file

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

June 3, 2023

The following remarks are those that I intended to make at the June 1, 2023 California Energy Workshop on Sea, had I been given the opportunity to do so:

Remarks to the CEC on Fisheries Impacts from OSW Development

Steve Scheiblaue June 1, 2023

I am Steve Scheiblaue. I retired after over 40 years as harbormaster in Santa Cruz and Monterey and during that time I worked extensively with fishermen on infrastructure needs and fishery management issues. I now serve as a consultant to several California commercial fishing organizations. I also serve on the Pacific Fishery Management Council's Habitat and Marine Planning Committees. I have been deeply involved in offshore wind issues since 2016.

Thank you for allowing me to speak about impacts to the fishing industry from the state's ocean industrialization goal of obtaining 25 GW of Offshore Wind power by 2045. GW of OSW power by 2045.

I acknowledge the work Commission staff has undertaken in engaging the fishing community, as it tries to identify suitable sea space to achieve the state's ambitious 25GW goal. Given that floating OSW facilities functionally close areas to fishing, fishermen are essentially being asked to identify which limb they want cut off. Please realize, every part of the ocean offshore California is utilized by one or more fisheries.

The fishing industry does not believe the Governor nor this Commission understand the degree of harm that will befall them, their communities, and food security--while creating significant, unintended, environmental consequences, in pursuit of this goal. It will be imperative that the

Energy Commission and other Agencies, plan offramps from the OSW highway, if the costs, such as to ratepayers, socioeconomic costs, or environmental costs--are too great.

A non-exhaustive list of 44 distinct impacts and concerning uncertainties, identified by the fishing industry, has been provided to Commission staff. I will briefly discuss a few examples, but please note that this list contains a number of environmental concerns, some of which you have heard about in earlier presentations.

The first impact example is displacement from historic, productive, fishing grounds. There will be significant losses of future income to our fleets, our dependent communities, and to the state's economy. Displacement will lead to increased fishing pressure in similar habitats, outside the wind farms. This brings secondary effects and losses, to deck hands, fish buyers, supply stores, and the tourism industry. Displacement removes fishing opportunity for future fishermen for at least the life of the lease.

A second example is the loss of US supplied, wild-capture seafood. California fisheries are among the best-managed in the world, with our seafood having a very low carbon footprint. With less local seafood available, our fish will be replaced with imports, from countries with weaker management, and with farm-raised fish. Each of these with a higher carbon footprint and environmental problems. Increased reliance on foreign imports leads to food IN-security.

Third, OSW development, beginning NOW at the planning stage, is already affecting fishermen's assets. Limited entry fishing permits, which sell on the open market for many thousands of dollars, are already diminishing in value due to the likelihood of removing large areas—up to 4,500 square miles, as we heard from Mr. Flint, to achieve 25 GW--from fishing. The value of these permits represents a large

piece of fishermen's retirement assets. Imagine how you would feel if your business faced such uncertainty, and it affected your ability to retire?

How will two-thousand offshore wind turbines impact upwelling, which is the primary the driver of productivity in the California Current? Studies are showing impacts are likely, but the degree of those impacts remains uncertain. Fishermen, ENGO's, scientists, and more, are very apprehensive about this, and other potential impacts to habitat, and to ecosystem functions.

I draw your attention to the state's goals focused on equity and social & environmental justice. Fishermen wonder when the state will apply them to fishermen, and to their communities. The seafood supply chain is strongly represented by people of color. Generally, the small central and north coast communities, which will be most affected by OSW, are already economically disadvantaged. Why are the burdens of ocean industrialization, in the name of energy production, being thrust overwhelmingly upon fishermen?

Fishermen hear the binary choice: either we have "rapid deployment" of OSW, or we have a burning planet. This seems false logic. If we accept this premise, we will rush industrialization despite the many and significant, unanswered, socioeconomic and environmental questions. Under this logic, why not rush through developments on land with scary environmental unknowns? Why not build 20 more nuclear plants, despite not knowing what to do with the spent fuel? Fishermen hope the state and BOEM will prioritize answering the many questions before charging recklessly forward. You have heard the request from others to use the first five leases as a demonstration project. Not to delay future leasing for 10-20 years, but for 2-3 years to do the scientific studies needed. Remember, once the wind farms are in place, very little

adaptive management will be able to occur. They are not going to be moved, reduced in scope, or stopped, even if whales and birds are distressed or killed in massive numbers.

Considering the long list of impacts to fishermen and to their dependent communities, is it any wonder why they view the state and federal process of industrializing the ocean with a sense of great foreboding?

Thank you.