

Humboldt Offshore Wind, BOEM

From: Mike Okoniewski <MOkoniewski.consultant@PacificSeafood.com>
Sent: Monday, September 13, 2021 2:03 PM
To: Humboldt Offshore Wind, BOEM; Gilbane, Lisa
Subject: [EXTERNAL] (Corrected date:) Comments on Humboldt Bay WEA from Mike Okoniewski

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September 12, 2021

Ms. Jean Thurston

HumboldtOffshoreWind@boem.gov;

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

Pacific Region Office of Strategic Resources

760 Paseo Camarillo, Suite 102 Camarillo,

California 93010 jean.thurston@boem.gov

Call for Information and Nominations (Call or Notice)

(Docket No. BOEM–2021–0044) (86 FR 40869, July 29, 2021)

and Designation of the Humboldt Bay Call Area as a Wind Energy Area.

Dear Ms. Thurston:

Please consider these comments on behalf of myself and my client Pacific Seafood regarding the Humboldt Wind Energy Area (WEA) Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's (BOEM) plans to develop an Environmental Assessment (EA) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for future commercial wind lease issuance on the Pacific Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) off the coast of Humboldt County, California.

Pacific Seafood (Pacific) has one of our major West Coast seafood processing plants based in Eureka California. Pacific purchased this plant in 1983 and modernized and equipped it to process a wide portfolio of seafood which includes multiple species of Pacific groundfish. Recently I spoke with several of our more prominent, long-term fishermen who have worked with Pacific Seafood, Eureka for several decades. Their fishing families have lived in the region for multiple generations.

The fishermen I spoke with said that a large amount of their catch comes from the Humboldt WEA. Various Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) advisory body reports^[1] to the September 2021 Council attest to this area being important to the commercial fishermen in this region,

I have enquired of individuals in the fishing industry, in or near Eureka, whether they have had any dialogue with BOEM. Also. I asked if they knew about plans to develop the Humboldt WEA. I have found no one in our Eureka management Team that had any conversations with BOEM. Likewise, none I have

spoken with has attended a BOEM webinar. Until recently only several had vague ideas about the project and did not understand the potential conflicts.

Having managed and been responsible for coastal processing plants for Pacific Seafood myself, I know the importance of Groundfish to our operations. If the Humboldt WEA is developed into a wind farm as outlined, the viability of our Eureka operation would be dependent on our fishermen being able to find other areas they could replace the lost catch without adding excessive cost to their operations.

This needs to be thoroughly analyzed in any EA going forward. Along with that would be impacts to communities, social and government services, poverty level changes, national food security interests, and supply chain impacts. The EA also needs to extend the scope of their analysis, beyond lost business on the water to cover all land-based losses. This needs to include all stranded capital and income losses for vessels and processing plants. In worse case scenarios this could lead to cessation of credit lines and bankruptcies.

Thank you for consideration of my comments.
Sincerely,



Mike Okoniewski,
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Woodland WA, 98674

C.c. Ms. Lisa Gilbane

^[1] See Sept 2021 Pacific Fishery Management Council Briefing Book Item E.1.a Marine Planning Committee Report page 3 (also other E.1.a advisory body reports in the same section)