



September 18, 2024

Dear Governor Kotek,

Protect US Fishermen respectfully asks you to formally request that the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) postpone the lease auction for Oregon wind energy areas currently scheduled for October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Previously your administration requested that BOEM delay approving any construction plans until the completion of the Oregon Road Map. Several occurrences in the last few months justify revisiting the initial request asked of you by many of us – and that is to postpone the lease auction. Delaying now will ensure that the Oregon Road Map is completed, and more information is available regarding impacts prior to any lease sale. There is no benefit to Oregon or Oregonians for rushing forward with this now.

First, there have been three blade failures in the last five months, one occurred in the United States on July 16<sup>th</sup> as part of the Vineyard Wind Project off Cape Cod where multiple tons of debris were spewed into the ocean. Two more of the same type of blade failed at the Dogger Bank Wind farm in Europe, one in May and the other within the last few weeks. The preliminary investigations have indicated that while the blades were all the same type, each blade failed for a different reason. Debris from the Vineyard Wind blade failure is still washing up on multiple shores almost two months after the catastrophe. A 300-foot-long piece of the shredded blade is still resting on the seabed. Small shards of fiberglass and other materials have most certainly made it into the food chain through consumption by shellfish and fish populations. Another alarming aspect of the Vineyard Wind incident is that the construction plan was approved without a response plan for a blade failure. The only response plan was for an oil spill. A simple google search demonstrates an average of 3,800 blade failures annually around the world with existing turbines. With thousands of turbines being considered for our coasts this means we will have frequent and dangerous blade failures at-sea. This is unacceptable and it demonstrates that rushing into this process off Oregon poses a dangerous risk.

Second, marine mammals continue to perish on the East Coast. There seems to be a direct correlation between survey activity and an increase in ship strikes on whales and

other creatures. Pro-wind advocates will say they don't know what is causing the unusual mortality event, but they "are sure" it is not offshore wind development activity. How can they possibly say this when the increased deaths are in perfect alignment with the increases in survey activity? If a whale is killed by a ship strike but was struck because it was disoriented from offshore wind energy activity than that activity is surely to blame. On September 11<sup>th</sup>, National Marine Fisheries Service highlight a [recent study](#) which blames ocean noise for the inability of killer whales to find and capture food. Survey activity which is permitted once a lease is granted will introduce additional noise and could harm marine mammals off Oregon – especially considering the critical habitat for endangered species which is within and adjacent to the wind energy lease areas.

Third, Oregon fishermen joined a delegation trip to Scotland to learn about the offshore wind energy industry there. The fishermen set up meetings with Scottish fishermen to hear about their experiences with offshore wind energy development. The Scottish fishermen reported that they were not consulted in the development of offshore wind, and they are going to lose up to 50% of their historical fishing grounds to offshore wind turbine farms. Further, there are now studies demonstrating negative biological impacts to shellfish within the range of the Scottish turbine farms.

Fourth, large amounts of money is pouring in from groups outside our coastal communities to infiltrate and influence how residents think about offshore wind energy development. What has occurred on the East Coast and in California is already happening in Oregon. This is another example of outside influences with deep pockets trying to buyout or buyoff rural coastal residents. This is not only deeply insulting, but it also exacerbates the schism between urbanites and coastal residents who are deemed as "angry mobs" or "uneducated" which could not be further from the truth – please see the attached opinion piece written by Heather Mann which encapsulates the ongoing David versus Goliath struggle on this issue.

Fifth, the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw have initiated litigation against BOEM which includes a delay in the lease auction. Oregon's tribes are resoundingly against offshore wind energy development currently. As governor you have indicated how important it is to raise tribal voices and ensure environmental justice. Asking BOEM to delay this auction is responsive to your previous comments and recognizes the extreme concerns and depth of unanswered questions that the Tribes have detailed in their complaint.

Finally, BOEM continues to tout their “close coordination” with stakeholders, tribes, fishermen and even the state task force. This statement is patently false. BOEM is not concerned about Oregon fishermen, coastal communities or tribes, they have demonstrated this lack of consideration over and over during the last few years. Why are we as Oregonians leaving the future of our ocean and coastal economies up to a federal agency that’s only interest is “leasing land”?

You may think that BOEM will ignore your request, and they might. But we won’t know that until you formally make the request. One thing that will occur if you make the request, you will send a strong message to the thousands of rural coastal Oregonians that you hear us, that you care about fishermen, tribes and coastal community economies. Please ask BOEM to delay the lease auction at least until the Oregon Road Map is completed and we have more information on potential negative impacts to our environment.

Sincerely,

Heather Mann on behalf of thousands of Oregon jobs and robust coastal economies.