



Monterey Bay
Aquarium®



April 21, 2023

Wade Crowfoot, Secretary for Natural Resources
Chair, California Ocean Protection Council
California Natural Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Action Item: Consideration and Approval to Disburse Funds for Offshore Wind Environmental Monitoring Guidance- SUPPORT

Dear Secretary Crowfoot and members of Ocean Protection Council:

Our organizations, the Environmental Defense Center, Monterey Bay Aquarium, Surfrider Foundation, National Resources Defense Center, Ocean Conservation Research, and Defenders of Wildlife write in support of the staff recommendation to authorize the disbursement of up to \$450,000 to develop comprehensive environmental monitoring guidance to support offshore wind development in California. We appreciate your efforts to further the scope of monitoring before any infrastructure for offshore wind begins construction. Any new offshore energy development may have impacts on the marine environment; even with the most conservation-oriented siting decisions, there may still be wildlife and habitat impacts. Environmental monitoring will be essential to ensuring that offshore wind development proceeds in a manner that maximizes benefits and reduces impacts.

Monitoring technologies can gather valuable information to establish a baseline understanding of the area being developed. This would enable a better understanding for any

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observed impacts to marine habitats during offshore wind development, construction, and operation. Creating a robust baseline will enable future monitoring and mitigation that could allow researchers to better understand how different data sources (e.g., habitat density models, tagging data, photo-ID data, acoustic data, biologically important areas, behavioral observations) can be combined within a pre-construction, active-construction, and post-construction monitoring framework to assess impacts to species and their habitat. Comprehensive baseline research and full consideration of potential impacts to marine areas will lay the groundwork for the ultimate expansion of offshore wind energy. We offer these monitoring recommendations some of our groups worked on together as a resource for your consideration.¹

Our organizations believe that offshore wind resources in California can and must be developed in an environmentally sound manner that reflects the vital importance of California's truly unique marine environment. Monitoring and data collection needs to start pre-construction and continue during development of offshore wind energy areas to assess any immediate changes and mitigate impacts when needed. The development of a comprehensive environmental monitoring guidance funded by the Ocean Protection Council supports our goals to increase California's green energy output responsibly and sustainably.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Linda Krop, Chief Counsel
Environmental Defense Center

Amy Wolfrum, Senior Manager of California Ocean Policy
Monterey Bay Aquarium

Pete Stauffer, Ocean Protection Manager
Surfrider Foundation

Irene Gutierrez, Senior Attorney
Natural Resources Defense Council

Michael Stocker, Executive Director
Ocean Conservation Research

Pamela Flick, California Program Director
Defenders of Wildlife

¹ https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.nrdc.org%2fsites%2fdefault%2ffiles%2fow_marine-life_monitoring_guidelines.pdf&c=E,1,qH52fC7W8MI0qe1hINbNvhYrOzLHrHkpGyPjnKh3nEMbNdn2VxC3gsORkbcse-PwPIs62YCBgoyKHSnzG-AaBXU3e3vL8v7OHIZhIRaVlfe0Znh8&typo=1