

To: David Rupkalvis

From: Steve Skinner – Letter to the Editor/Guest Column

This is in response to Kathleen Hornstuen's critical letter to the Editor in the September 12th edition of the World Newspaper regarding my guest column on August 29th.

Nowhere did I accuse the Port of Coos Bay of not doing its homework. My point was clearly made that we, the public, don't know if the Port has done its homework or how much it has done, and most importantly, we don't know its findings! The Port has shared very little in the way of specific details... hence my list of questions. The few details the Port provided indicate its planned container project will have an enormous negative effect on almost everything that now constitutes how we all live and work in the Bay Area. That outweighs the new jobs that may be generated from creating the container terminal.

If we, as a community, want to create new jobs, it appears we would have a far better fit with offshore wind energy (OSWE). Nowhere in my column did I advocate for OSWE. I said the Port (and our community) should be actively exploring OSWE to the same level as it is pursuing its container project.

Ms. Hornstuen could not have been more wrong in stating that it is in Federal hands only! It is in Oregon state and our Bay Area hands.

OSWE is coming (and is coming fairly quickly) because of the climate CRISIS (google the word CRISIS). The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) is involved and a critical part of the equation primarily because the winds off Oregon's coastline are in Federal waters – which have wind speeds equal to the best in the world for clean energy generation. OSWE is providing an opportunity for SW Oregon because of these excellent wind speeds. For its part, Oregon adopted legislation in 2021 that requires Portland General Electric and Pacific Power to submit plans to reduce emissions by 80% from a baseline amount by 2035 and 100% by 2040. Note that Oregon is not alone. In 2021, California adopted legislation requiring 100% renewable energy by 2045. So, Oregon has more progressive targets for clean energy than its neighbor. However, while

California has declared it seeks 25 GW of OSWE by 2045 to help it achieve that goal Oregon is sitting on the fence without a clear quantity in mind.

With its Port asset in the Bay Area, our community is (potentially) the significant third part of the equation. It could have a major role in Oregon's future involvement with OSWE. To find active port engagement in this new industry, look south and check out the Port of Humboldt in Eureka, CA, and its vigorous efforts to upgrade port infrastructure to support the fabrication, assembly, and launching of windfloat systems. They are already a major player. Coos Bay is well located and already has better infrastructure and greater space availability, and transmission capacity to support the offshore wind industry development. Why miss out and leave everything to California?

If we continue to let this opportunity slip away without our solid embrace, we will miss our one probable chance to finally diversify and grow our regional economy in a more compatible way.

Remember, OSWE offers a significant additional big plus: this industry will NOT require extensive dredging of the lower Coos Bay. With over 80 different windfloat technologies to choose from (with more coming online), whichever global corporation is awarded an offshore wind Lease Area in the auction bid, would unlikely choose the expense of deepening and widening the Coos Bay channel, and disposing of toxic sediment over the alternative of selecting green, low and known environmental impacts by barging, using chip-size ships and rail.

BOEM expects to auction some portions of Oregon's two Draft Wind Energy Areas in August 2024. Successful offshore wind developers must prepare an Environmental Impact Statement, Site Assessment Plans, and Construction and Operation Plans for the projects to proceed step by step from concept to eventual placement at sea. These required steps will provide multiple opportunities for public input over the next 2-6 years.

Are there questions to be answered? Absolutely! Will more questions arise over the next 2-6 years? Again – ABSOLUTELY!!

But some of the fundamental questions have already been answered. For example: we now know from the National Center for Coastal Ocean Science model that offshore wind systems and fisheries can co-exist. BOEM has posted a half-dozen or more studies on its website every year since 2016. More are coming, and more are critically needed specific to our offshore marine and wind conditions. This means we will continue to have many opportunities to bring EVERYONE TO THE SAME TABLE AT THE SAME TIME and put together the information we have (e.g., fishing locations) and to identify information we need to make the best possible choices as quickly as possible.

We can't afford foot-dragging! Let's take a good, hard look together. Once the bidding process is completed, we should all use the 2-6 years period to work with the leaseholder company and use the public input to ensure our thoughts, opinions, and ideas are heard and acted upon.

In that time frame, we, the public, will have the opportunity to offer ideas to the developers and policymakers. For example, if new transmission lines are needed, would running new power lines on poles along the rail line be feasible and acceptable? Maybe we could even use the offshore wind-generated electricity to electrify the rail line and to supply any surplus power to northern Oregon – who knows?

OSWE may not initially be the cheapest form of renewable energy compared with rates presently paid from other forms of electricity generation. Still, it should be evaluated by its other attributes, such as diversifying the State's geographical dependency, reducing imports from out of state, and contributing to the grid's reliability and the region's resilience. For these reasons, OSWE must surely be given a fair chance to have full consideration of being part of Oregon's renewable energy mix. If volcanic activity blocks out the sun, solar energy is lost, and alternatives like wind become vital.

BOEM has scheduled an in-person public meeting 4-8:00 PM at the Coos Bay Public Library Myrtlewood Room on September 27th. Let's be open-minded and go there to learn more and better understand this industry and the opportunities it may bring to our region. All of us have a responsibility to know the facts and then, should we wish, make our thoughts known by providing feedback to BOEM with

written public comments before the closing date of October 16rd using the following link:

<https://www.regulations.gov/document/BOEM-2023-0033-0001>.

Respectfully,
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