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WEST COAST FISHING INDUSTRY GROUP RESPONDS TO OFFSHORE WIND ANNOUNCEMENT

San Francisco, CA – Tuesday, May 25, 2021. Earlier today, the federal government and State of California announced, “an effort to advance areas for offshore wind off the northern and central coasts of California – opening up the Pacific Coast to its first commercial scale offshore clean energy projects”. In its [Fact Sheet](#), the White House indicated its intent to change the size and shape of the [Morro Bay Call Area](#); and to advance “the Humboldt Call Area as a potential Wind Energy Area.” Governor Newsom’s [press statement](#) pays homage to his California Comeback Plan which includes a proposed \$20 million in funding to support California’s offshore wind capacity. Unfortunately, none of this funding will be used to support fisheries research or impacts mitigation.

Also today, BOEM announced it will hold “a virtual California Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force meeting open to the public to listen and attend on June 24, 2021 to discuss both central and northern California offshore wind planning areas considered for future leasing and next steps in the BOEM leasing process moving forward.” Unfortunately for many in the fishing community, that is when the June Pacific Fishery Management Council begins. It is inexcusable that BOEM, who has claimed to engage closely with the Council, would schedule a Task Force meeting during the Council’s meeting. The fishing community will now have to choose between attending the Council meeting and participating in discussions fostering our sustainable fisheries or attending a meeting where they will be told that dire consequences are possible for the fisheries the Council manages.

“The Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen’s Associations (PCFFA) remains concerned about rushing unproven technology, with unknown impacts to our ocean ecosystem, in locations which were not identified with any meaningful input by the fishing industry. Floating wind turbines have not been deployed in the scale being considered off the California coast. Far too many questions remain unanswered regarding potential impacts to marine life which is dependent on a healthy ecosystem” said Mike Conroy, PCFFA’s Executive Director. “For example, potential impacts to

upwelling, potential impacts of noise generated by construction and operation of an industrial offshore wind farm, and impacts of electromagnetic fields on pacific coast salmon stocks, other important commercial and recreational fish stocks, marine mammals and sea birds are all still unanswered.”

“The fishing industry has been told these areas work best for offshore wind developers; but no one has asked us what areas would work best for us” added Mike Conroy. “There has been no effort to engage with or partner with fishermen, no planning process to evaluate fisheries data and spatial needs to inform this development, nor is there a clear process for how to do that through permitting now that we have missed the opportunity to plan effectively. The areas announced today are large areas; and with additional Call Areas likely to be identified off California and Oregon later this year, a comprehensive, upfront, cumulative effects analysis should be required.”

We do want to offer our sincere thanks and appreciation to California State Senator McGuire for the comments he made today during the Senate Budget Subcommittee #2 hearing when addressing the \$700,000 earmarked for outreach “to ports, Tribes, labor, coastal communities and more” he noted the commercial fishing industry is missing. “We need to look at what potential impacts there will be for commercial fishermen with offshore wind.” He went on to say, “we need to make sure that the commercial fishing fleet have a seat at the table.” We thank Senator McGuire for his continued support of the commercial fishing industry and look forward to discussions with him and his staff regarding Senate Bill 413.

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About PCFFA

The Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen’s Associations is the largest commercial fishermen’s organization on the West Coast, representing 17 local and regional associations from Santa Barbara to Southeast Alaska. As a major commercial fishing industry trade association, PCFFA represents the interests of commercial fishing families who make their living harvesting and delivering high-quality seafood to America’s tables.

Media contact:

Mike Conroy is available to offer opinions and comment on offshore renewable technology and how California fishermen are already taking measures to reduce their carbon footprint and other stories relevant to fishing, ocean health, fishery management, and the impact of climate change on our local waters.

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