



THE CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION AND OFFSHORE WIND



📍 What is happening with offshore wind in California?

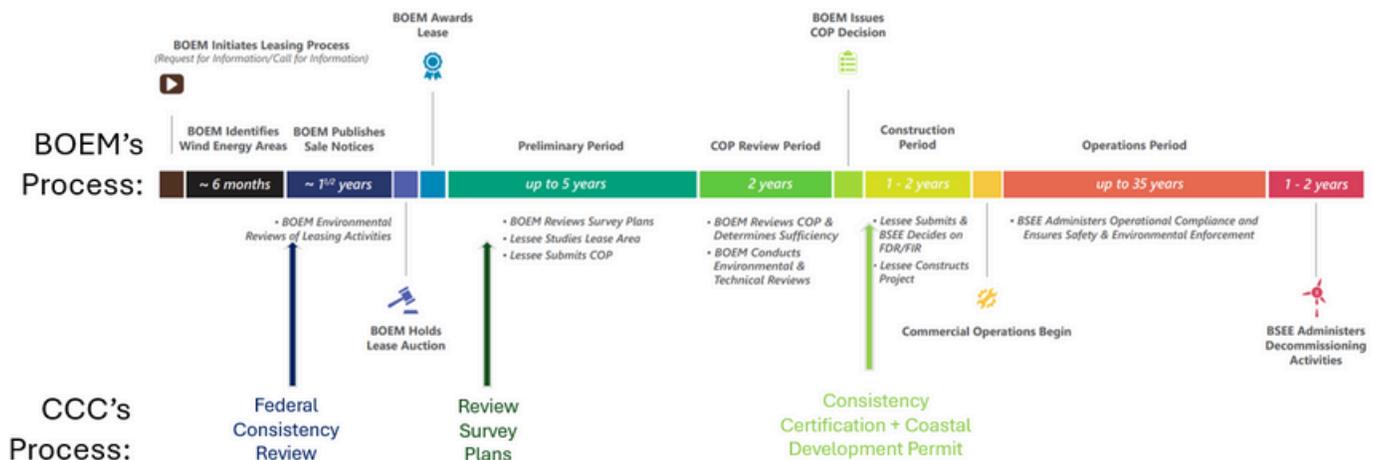
California is committed to achieving carbon neutrality no later than 2045 ([Exec. Order No. B-55-18](#)) in large part through the expansion of renewable energy sources. The state must roughly triple its current renewable electric power capacity to meet this target. California, through [AB 525](#), created an offshore wind strategic plan to develop up to 25 gigawatts of offshore wind energy in federal waters off California’s coast. California emphasizes that careful planning, comprehensive analysis of potential impacts, and a commitment to environmental monitoring and adaptive management are central to ensuring coastal resource protection while also expanding the state’s renewable energy portfolio.

Offshore wind development has begun in California with the leasing of two offshore wind energy areas (WEAs) in federal waters, one off of Humboldt County and one off of Morro Bay. The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) auctioned the lease areas at the end of 2022; five companies secured leases, two in the Humboldt WEA and three in the Morro Bay WEA.

📍 What is the Commission’s role?

For projects in federal waters, the Commission has two opportunities to weigh in on offshore wind through its [federal consistency](#) and state regulatory processes. The first occurs prior to a BOEM lease sale of the WEAs. At this stage, the Commission assesses whether the leasing process, including any reasonably foreseeable development within a proposed lease area, is consistent with [Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act](#). During consistency review the CCC considers potential impacts on marine resources, commercial and recreational fishing, environmental justice communities, and Tribal cultural resources. In 2022 the Commission conditionally concurred; [Humboldt WEA](#) and [Morro Bay WEA](#) consistency determinations.

The second opportunity occurs after specific projects are proposed. Here, the Commission reviews the lease-holder's construction and operation plans and will consider both a coastal development permit for project components in the Commission’s direct jurisdiction (i.e., state waters and some onshore areas) and a consistency certification for project components in federal waters. Here too, the policies in the Coastal Act guide the permitting and consistency review of the offshore wind development.



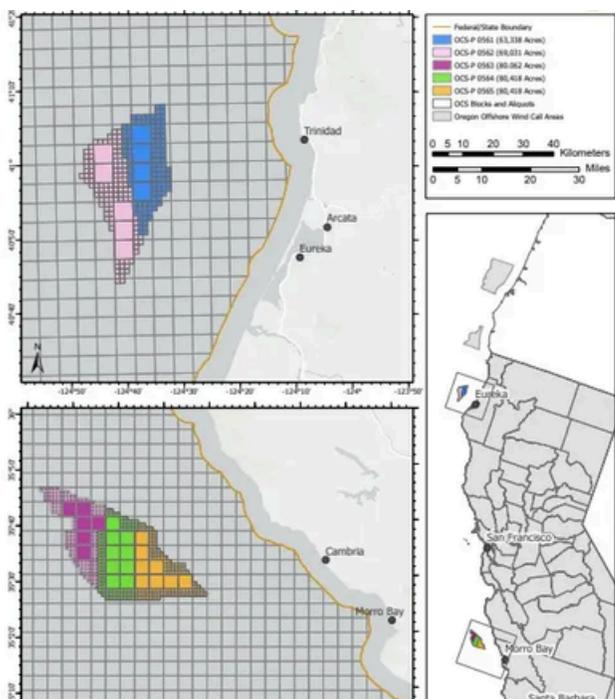
📍 What issues and impacts are part of the Commission's review?

Offshore wind development must be planned and implemented in a manner that protects coastal resources. In reviewing leasing or specific projects, the Commission assesses impacts that floating offshore wind may have on the following:

- Marine Resources and Water Quality
- Commercial and Recreational Fishing
- Coastal Hazards
- Scenic and Visual Resources
- Public Access and Recreation
- Tribal and Cultural Resources
- Environmental Justice Communities

📍 What is happening currently?

The five leaseholders are in various stages of planning for future development. Some leaseholders have begun mapping and analyzing conditions offshore while others are planning and have not yet started surveying their lease areas. The signed leases and plans can be found on the [BOEM website](#).



Map shows final lease areas off of California with state and federal offshore boundary. Source: BOEM

During its consistency review of the lease sale, the Commission included a condition to form a working group to develop a statewide strategy to find ways to avoid and minimize impacts to the fishing community and develop a compensation framework for any impacts that cannot be avoided. The California Offshore Wind and Fisheries Working Group (Working Group) was later codified by the passing of [SB 286](#). Per the requirements of SB 286, the Working Group must complete a draft Statewide Strategy that the Commission will review for consistency with policies of [Chapter 3](#) of the Coastal Act, modify the draft as necessary to ensure consistency, and adopt a revised strategy. The adopted strategy will subsequently guide the permitting for OSW-related development in state waters and the federal consistency review of construction and operations plans.

📍 Interagency Coordination

The Commission collaborates with a multitude of local, state, and federal agencies on planning and regulatory review of offshore wind in California. State agency partners such as the California Energy Commission, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, California State Lands, and the California Ocean Protection Council, and federal agency partners such as BOEM and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration have been critical in helping the Commission fulfill its role in planning and regulatory review of offshore wind. Additionally, these agencies have been contributing knowledge and regulatory guidance to the work of the Offshore Wind and Fisheries Working Group.

In addition, Commission staff have been meeting and coordinating with Coastal Zone Management agencies on the East Coast and West Coast to explore challenges, lessons learned, and opportunities that offshore wind might bring to the West Coast.

📍 Want to learn more?

Read more about our federal consistency unit [here](#). Read more about our offshore wind work [here](#). For questions, contact our offshore wind team, at OSW@coastal.ca.gov