

## Historic lease sale for offshore wind In California advances

November 3, 2022



A historic network of Northern California Tribal Nations, local governments, community leaders and institutions, community-based organizations, environmental groups, and academics have come together to call for 50 percent local investment and protections for Tribes, the environment, and underrepresented communities. The network was convened by the Redwood Region Climate and Community Resilience Hub (CORE Hub), an incubated program of the Humboldt Area Foundation and the Wild Rivers Community Foundation (HAF+WRCF).

**UNCEDDED LANDS OF THE WIYOT PEOPLE** — The North Coast Community Benefits Network is calling for bolder, community-centered benefits in response to the federal government’s first West Coast offshore wind lease sale. Tribal Nations, local government and academics, environmental groups, labor, and community leaders throughout the region have come together as the North Coast Community Benefits Network (“the Network”) to advocate that offshore wind be developed sustainably in a way that benefits Tribal Nations and underrepresented communities, protects the environment and builds a resilient and equitable local economy for all.

Offshore wind energy in the Pacific took a leap forward this week, as the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) released the Final Sale Notice (FSN) for commercial wind energy leasing on the outer continental shelf in offshore Central and Northern California. This is the first-ever lease sale proposed on the West Coast and will open up five lease areas for auction – three off Morro Bay in Central California and two

off Humboldt Bay in the North Coast region. The FSN includes a list of the 43 companies qualified to bid for an offshore wind lease, with an auction scheduled for Dec. 6.

Offshore wind development on the North Coast is pivotal to meeting state and federal climate goals and can provide vital energy reliability and climate resilience benefits to the region. However, past boom and bust industries in the North Coast have harmed Tribal Nations and precious ecosystems, and the region is still recovering from a legacy of underinvestment. Today, many communities in the region lack reliable electricity, broadband, transportation housing, as well as access to childcare.

“Far too often in our region, racialized and extractive natural resource industries have a significant cost in terms of collateral damage to underserved and marginalized communities,” said Bryna Lipper, CEO of HAF+WRCF. “Today, North Coast Community Benefits Network aims to rewrite that script as it relates to offshore wind by advocating for community-driven development approaches.”

In comments submitted to BOEM this summer, the Network recommended a 50 percent bid credit package to be dedicated to Tribes, Tribal Fisheries, local communities, and environmental research and monitoring. This means that 50 percent of the federal revenues from the lease sale that would otherwise go to the federal government would be used locally instead. The Network additionally proposed safety and protections for Tribal Nations and the environment and targeted commitments to building a local workforce around construction, operations, and science. California submitted similar comments to BOEM, including a recommendation that the government direct 50 percent of the revenues to communities that will host the budding industry.

BOEM’s offshore wind Final Sale Notice offers a pathway towards achieving community benefits but ultimately falls short of providing the investments required for equitable wind energy development. Unfortunately, the FSN fails to include necessary protections and benefits for Tribal Nations, the environment, Environmental Justice Communities, and Tribal and commercial fisheries, which are all critical to sustainable and equitable development in the North Coast region.

“Offshore wind energy can be a catalyst to meet energy equity, reliability, and lower pollution goals of all kinds to help solve the climate crisis and improve our communities. The specter of harm done by past energy and extractive industries looms over this, though. We need to be wise about the regulatory guardrails, capacities in host regions, and developer and community strategic partnership deployments to make sure this set of energy industries is done far better this time,” said Jana Ganion, Director of Sustainability and Government Affairs at Blue Lake Rancheria and CORE Hub Senior Advisor.

“The communities of the Samoa Peninsula include some of the neighborhoods most likely to be changed by offshore wind development,” said Natalie Arroyo, Natural Resources Projects Coordinator for the Redwood Community Action Agency. “The Peninsula Community Collaborative, composed of residents and small businesses in Manila, Samoa, Fairhaven, and Finnetown, wants to ensure that local voices are heard, and that important infrastructure is sustained. The historic boom and bust cycle of resource extraction around

Humboldt Bay has left a lasting impact, and the Peninsula community wants to ensure that energy development takes a more sustainable path.”

#### About the Redwood CORE Hub

The Redwood Region Climate And Community Resilience Hub (CORE Hub) is a community organization dedicated to solving the climate emergency through actions that result in more resilient communities and ecosystems.

The CORE Hub was established by regional leaders in climate resilience, mitigation, and adaptation and is based at the Humboldt Area Foundation and Wild Rivers Community Foundation, serving the California counties of Humboldt, Del Norte, and Trinity, as well as Curry County in Oregon. The CORE Hub’s service area includes 27 Tribal Nations and Indigenous Territories. The CORE Hub’s goal is to help the region become the first proven carbon-sequestering rural and Tribal region in the United States. The CORE Hub acts toward this goal through planning and policy guidance; facilitating healthy civic dialogue; taking action for equity; promoting accurate, accessible public information; providing research, analysis, and technical assistance; project acceleration; promoting traditional knowledge and multi-generational values; and conducting rigorous tracking to document progress and ensure accountability.

To learn more about the CORE Hub’s work and community partnerships, visit <https://redwoodcorehub.org/about/>.