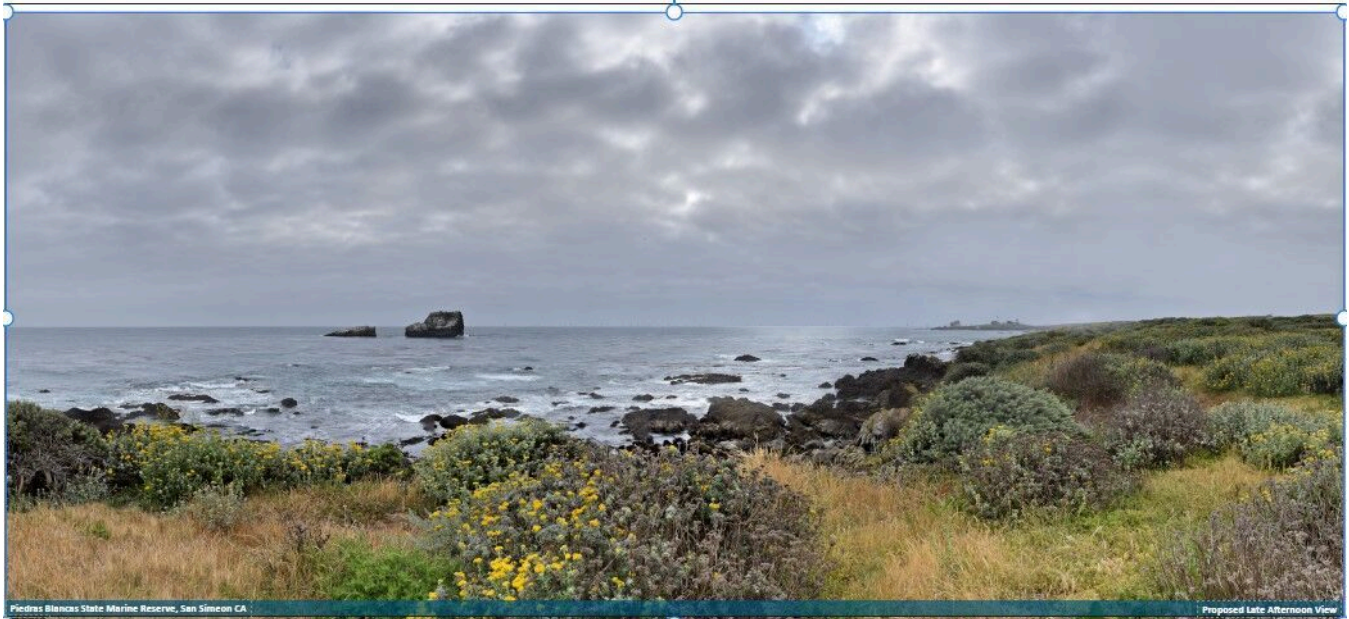


Offshore-Wind Backers Press State to Stop Issuing Fossil-Fuel Permits

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Local elected officials are calling on Gov. Gavin Newsom to halt all permitting for future oil and gas projects, in light of recent progress with offshore wind.

The feds are getting ready to hold a lease auction in August or September for sites off Morro Bay to build floating wind turbines.

Andy Pease, a member of the San Luis Obispo city council, said the potential for offshore wind on the Central Coast and for Humboldt County is huge; enough to power 1.6 million homes.

"There's no reason to be having new gas extraction permits or any fossil fuels," Pease contended. "We need to leave those in the ground. We've got the capability. Let's make it happen."

Newsom has already pledged to cease all fracking permits by 2024. Groups fighting climate change would like him to take the next step and also block any expansion of oil drilling. Opponents want oil and gas to remain part of the energy mix and say jobs in the field are at risk.

John Headding, mayor of Morro Bay, said the floating offshore turbines will take at least six years to come to fruition, because the state would need to build a deep-water port nearby.

"This new renewable industry is a significant step in our efforts to help address the climate crisis," Headding asserted. "And help California reach its goal of achieving 100% renewable and carbon-free electricity by 2045."

Habib Joseph Dagher, professor of civil and structural engineering at the University of Maine, has designed and deployed a prototype, which successfully fed into the New England electric grid as part of a project called Aqua Ventus.

"The advantages of floating is that you can put them beyond the horizon," Dagher pointed out. "So people don't see them from land, you can also have a lot more places you can put them that would minimize impact on the environment, minimize impact on wildlife, and also minimize impacts on other users, such as fishing and so forth."

The turbines would be about 20 miles offshore and would feed electricity into the grid at night.