



California State Lands Commission

Commission's Disability Advisory Committee

The Commission's Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) is comprised of employees who are individuals with a disability, or who have an interest in disability issues. The DAC advises the Executive Office on issues of concern to employees with disabilities, and on matters relating to any underrepresentation of persons with a disability in employment. The mission of the DAC is to advance policies, practices, and education to strengthen the Commission Workforce. At least twice a year, DAC members create and distribute newsletters to staff featuring educational information on various disability-related issues. DAC members also coordinate with other agencies and outside speakers to provide disability-focused trainings and talks to staff throughout the year. Most recently, the DAC and the Commission's Equal Employment Officer worked together to facilitate a training for all staff on disability awareness and etiquette, which was presented virtually by the Department of Rehabilitation on November 3. The winter edition of the DAC's newsletter is set to be distributed this month.

Platform Holly and Piers 421 Decommissioning (South Ellwood) Project

Staff continues to maintain and monitor Platform Holly and the onshore facilities to ensure public health and safety. Staff, ExxonMobil, and their subcontractors have continued to work on the abandonment process, which is nearing completion. Well work to seal off the producing intervals of the 30 platform wells is now complete. We are now entering a six-week monitoring period where the wells will be regularly checked to confirm the seals pressure integrity. After the monitoring period, we will address any issues that were observed during the monitoring, install the remaining surface plugs, and start conductor casing removal, which will cut the connections between the platform and the seabed. Staff continues to work closely with ExxonMobil and their subcontractors to ensure that the work is conducted safely and responsibly.

Staff are also working to develop and implement plans to flush and inert both the platform and the Ellwood Onshore Facility at the end of the well abandonment work. This will enable the platform to be put into a safe and

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clean caretaker status mode while ExxonMobil performs its platform removal engineering study and the environmental impact assessment is completed.

The 421 piers and caissons removal began in August and is expected to be complete by February 2023. Crews removed the old wellheads on the previously abandoned wells as well as the soil filling the internal space inside both caissons. Crews have demolished and removed most of the concrete caisson walls on the first pier and will start demolishing and removing the concrete caisson walls on the second pier this week or early next week. The project is on schedule and going well. Commission staff and environmental contractors regularly monitor the worksite.

As previously reported, this past August, the Commission won a major legal victory against the Trustee for the Venoco bankruptcy estate, defeating the Trustee's claim for inverse condemnation based on the Commission's necessary use of the Ellwood Onshore Facility to safely plug the 30 wells on Platform Holly following Venoco's desertion of and failure to decommission those facilities. The Bankruptcy Court found the Commission's actions to be a valid exercise of its police powers. The Trustee appealed and submitted its opening appellate brief. Commission staff, along with its litigation counsel, are preparing a responding brief defending its victory. A hearing before the United States District Court for the District of Delaware will likely be scheduled in mid-2023. The Commission's case against Plains Pipeline for damages arising from the rupture of Line 901 in 2015, including damages incurred after Venoco quitclaimed its leases and Platform Holly to the Commission, continues and is scheduled for trial in Santa Barbara Superior Court in January 2024.

Rincon Decommissioning Project

Phase 1 work, consisting of abandonment of the wells and oil facilities at the former state oil and gas leases at Rincon Point in Ventura, is complete. Rincon Island and the nearby onshore site were placed into caretaker status in July 2021, and will remain that way while the Phase 2 California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documentation is completed, and until the final Phase 3 work, which will include the final island and onshore decommissioning, commences. In July of this year, the Commission released a Final Feasibility Study that followed a 60-day public review and comment period on the draft Study. The Commission approved the Final Feasibility Study in August and

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approved staff recommendations for the Rincon Phase 2 Decommissioning Project and alternatives to be analyzed in an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) under CEQA. Approved staff recommendations included: 1) elimination of the Complete Removal Alternative from further analysis and consideration as it was determined to be infeasible; 2) identification of the proposed Project (formerly referred to as the Reuse Alternative) to include retention of Rincon Island and the causeway, decommissioning of the onshore facility, removal of Rincon Island surface structures, removal of the Island's well bay concrete deck, removal of the Island's pavement and contaminated soil, backfill of the Island with clean soil, decommissioning onshore pipeline connections, and improvement of the State Coastal Conservancy parcel, and 3) identification of alternatives to analyze in the EIR, which is subject to change during the EIR scoping process.

On October 4, staff released a Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report and on October 20, staff convened a scoping meeting in Carpinteria in two sessions (one in-person session and one hybrid (in-person and Zoom) session). The public review period ended on November 4. Staff received 11 comment letters that will be addressed in the Draft EIR. Staff will continue its consultation with other government agencies during this process, including the California Coastal Commission, State Coastal Conservancy, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, National Marine Fisheries Service, and Ventura County, as well as with affiliated Tribes.

SB 44 Legacy Well Remediation Program

[Item 65](#) on the Agenda is a request for the Commission to delegate authority to the Executive Officer to undertake any actions necessary to effectuate the purposes of SB 44, including entering into interagency agreements, amending existing contracts, issuing contract solicitations for needed services, and entering into new contracts for contractors to perform seep studies and other work related to the Commission's Coastal Hazard and Legacy Well Removal and Remediation Program. The seep studies proposed will likely require historical research and an inventory of offshore natural oil and gas seeps. The survey, study, and monitoring of oil and gas seepage (seep studies) in state waters will determine locations, rates, and other techniques to characterize oil and gas samples originating from natural seeps, as well as their environmental impacts.

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Staff expect to seek a consultant to perform this work in 2023, depending on funding availability. These studies are an essential part of the Commission's efforts to research hydrocarbon sources leaking into surrounding waters and onto the beach.

The Commission plans to re-abandon two additional offshore wells along the Treadwell Pier (Treadwell-1 and Treadwell-5) and permitting for that work is underway. The re-abandonment approach will be similar to the approach used in the Treadwell-10 and NorthStar-815 abandonments performed in 2020, with some improvements or modifications based on lessons learned from previous operations. The abandonment approach involves driving a pipe-pile around the well, like a sleeve, and filling the pipe with cement, entombing the well. This work will occur, depending on funding availability, in the second half of 2023.

Interagency Desalination Working Group

California's recently released [State Water Supply Strategy](#) calls for expanding brackish groundwater desalination production by 28,000 acre-feet per year by 2030 and 84,000 acre-feet per year by 2040 and helping to guide the location of seawater desalination projects to where they are cost effective and environmentally appropriate. To that end, the State Water Board, Regional Water Boards, California Coastal Commission, Department of Water Resources, State Lands Commission, and other state entities have formed an interagency working group to:

1. Develop criteria for siting desalination facilities along the coast and recommend new standards to facilitate approval by June 30, 2023.
2. Identify potential mitigation sites to facilitate the expedited approval of desalination facilities by June 30, 2024.

To achieve these goals, the State Water Board has convened two separate Interagency Groups to identify and implement objectives. These include a Desalination Siting Criteria Interagency Group and a Desalination Mitigation Interagency Group. Commission staff are participating in each of these groups. The Interagency Groups began meeting in October 2022, to brainstorm and gather relevant data from each agency, and will continue to meet approximately twice per month to collaborate toward achieving the

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desalination siting criteria and mitigation goals highlighted in the [State Water Supply Strategy](#). The two Interagency Groups are focusing on desalination permit streamlining, interagency priorities for regulating desalination facilities, types of and criteria for desalination mitigation projects, and lessons learned from previous desalination projects.

Tijuana River Pollution Crisis

On November 18, the US EPA and International Boundary and Water Commission, U.S. Section (USIBWC) issued a Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement Mitigation of Contaminated Transboundary Flows Project. The Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement identifies a No-Action Alternative and two alternatives for implementing the Proposed Action. Alternative 1 includes “Core Projects” that are sufficiently evolved to be ready for decision making and, after completing the NEPA process, would be considered analyzed in sufficient detail for immediate action. Alternative 2, “the comprehensive solution”, includes the Core Projects identified in Alternative 1 plus a larger range of projects known as the Supplemental Projects, which require additional consideration in subsequent NEPA documents before a decision can be made. The Commission, in partnership with state and local partners, submitted a joint comment letter supporting Alternative 1 and emphasizing the importance of pursuing Alternative 2.

The US EPA and USIBWC identified Alternative 2 as the preferred alternative. Within Alternative 2, the US EPA and USIBWC determined that Project A, Option A3 (Expand to 60 Million Gallons per Day) and Project B, Option B1 (Trenching via Smuggler’s Gulch and Monument Road) are the preferred sub-options in Alternative 2. Comments on the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement can be submitted to Tijuana-Transboundary-EIS@epa.gov by [December 19](#). The Commission remains engaged with federal, state, and local partners to address the ongoing pollution crisis at the border and will continue to monitor for updates as the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement is finalized and actions are implemented.



Offshore Wind Energy

Offshore Renewable Energy Applications in the Pacific Ocean Near Vandenberg Space Force Base

Staff continues to process two applications for wind energy projects offshore of Vandenberg Space Force Base. In late September, staff released a Request for Qualifications for an environmental consultant to prepare an EIR for the CADEMO project. Staff is now reviewing and ranking the proposals. Earlier this month, staff met with environmental planning staff from Vandenberg Space Force Base to discuss the possibility of preparing a joint CEQA/NEPA document. Staff will continue to work with other responsible and trustee agencies, stakeholders, and tribes during the environmental review process. The second wind energy project application, the BW IDEOL application, remains paused at the applicant's request.

Coordinated Offshore Wind Energy Planning in Federal Waters

Staff continues to participate in offshore wind planning in federal waters as a member of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM)-CA Intergovernmental Task Force for offshore wind, and as a state agency named in AB 525 (Chiu, Chapter 231, Statutes of 2021). AB 525 requires the Energy Commission, in coordination with specified agencies, including the Commission, to develop a strategic plan for offshore wind in federal waters and requires the Energy Commission to submit the plan to the Legislature and the California Natural Resources Agency by June 2023.

Below are additional updates about the federal leasing process, task force, AB 525 planning, and public engagement activities associated with offshore wind energy development planning.

Federal Leasing Process and Task Force

Last month, BOEM released a Final Environmental Assessment for the Morro Bay Wind Energy Area and issued a finding of no significant impact. BOEM also released a final sale notice for the Pacific Wind Lease Sale-1 (PACW-1). The PACW-1 auction was held on December 6. Updates will be posted at www.boem.gov/california. Full bid results, including round-by-round results of the entire sale and exit bids, will be published on BOEM's website after review of the results and announcement of the provisional winners. BOEM will offer three lease

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areas off central California (all within the Morro Bay Wind Energy Area) and two lease areas off northern California (all within the Humboldt Wind Energy Area).

AB 525 Planning and Compliance

With respect to port infrastructure and capacity, there are numerous studies being conducted by BOEM, the Central Coast Regional Economic Action Coalition (REACH), National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), and the Commission. All of these studies, which are scheduled to be completed by the end of this year or in the early part of 2023, are considered input studies and will inform the AB 525 Strategic Plan chapter on Seaport readiness. hosted by the California Energy Commission. Staff continues to work closely with the California Energy Commission and BOEM to assess California seaport readiness and determine the necessary physical investments to facilitate successful offshore wind energy development consistent with the planning goals. On October 31, Commission staff and the California Energy Commission hosted a [public workshop](#) to discuss ongoing port studies. Speakers from the Commission, BOEM, Moffat and Nichol, REACH and NREL presented on their respective studies. The workshop was held to show the public that the Commission is undergoing a coordinated effort at the local, state, and regional level in hopes of better understanding the current progress and future challenges of port infrastructure readiness related to offshore wind.

Public engagement and outreach

Staff intends to facilitate another outreach session to fishermen later this month to discuss the December 6 lease auction and inform the north coast fishing community about any progress related to port infrastructure.