

# Eureka Times-Standard

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## Humboldt County supes OK resolution on offshore wind development benefits



The Humboldt County Board of Supervisors discuss a resolution on supporting the sustainable development of offshore wind and taking a collaborative approach with community partners. (Screenshot)

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Leases to develop wind farms off the coast of California are set to be auctioned off next week, and the county supervisors are expressing their support for developing offshore wind in a sustainable and inclusive way.

On Tuesday, the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a resolution stating the county expects to remain engaged in the process of offshore wind development, along with the rest of the affected members of the community, including fishing groups and tribal nations.

“We’re a dynamic and complex and diverse community from the perspective of interests, but nonetheless we’re doing the work,” said 3rd District Supervisor Mike Wilson.

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management is set to auction off the leases for offshore wind development off the coast of California on Tuesday. Two of the five lease areas being auctioned are off the coast of Humboldt Bay.

Developers are expecting a small wind farm that can generate enough power for Humboldt County to be completed by the end of the decade, though a larger buildout is expected over time as upgrades are made to the grid.

This is the second wind project being proposed in the county in the past five years, though the Terra-Gen onshore wind project ultimately didn’t receive the permits it needed to proceed with the project after the Wiyot Tribe said the project was set to be constructed on sacred land.

Fifth District Supervisor Steve Madrone said that makes reaching out to the tribes early in the process and in a substantive way important.

“I’m hopeful we can figure all that out,” Madrone said.

However, Jeff Hunerlach, district representative for Operating Engineers Local No. 3, took issue with the fact that the county did not reach out to labor, which he said is an integral part of making sure people in the community have good work opportunities as the wind farms are developed.

“Every labor union with a new apprenticeship program up here, that’s our vision,” Hunerlach said.

This isn’t the last time the county will be talking about offshore wind and the resolution simply expressed support for taking a collaborative approach with community stakeholders rather than making any definitive commitments.

The county’s Economic Development Director Scott Adair added that there is a lot of work already taking place as far as preparing the local workforce for offshore wind development, like regularly engaging the private sector about how the county can help address their workforce needs.

Ken Bates, of the Humboldt Fishermen’s Marketing Association, said the association sees the resolution as a first step and appreciated that the county listened to the fishermen’s suggestions and incorporated them into the resolution, even if in a tempered down fashion.

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