Testimony of
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Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources
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Chair Lowenthal, Ranking Member Stauber, and members of the Subcommittee, I am pleased to appear before you today to discuss the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's (BOEM's) role in developing America's renewable energy resources on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). My name is Doug Boren, and I am the Regional Director of BOEM's Pacific Regional Office at the Department of the Interior (Department).

Background

As the lead Federal agency for offshore wind energy development, BOEM is advancing the leasing and regulatory processes needed to move offshore wind forward as part of the Biden-Harris administration's goal of deploying 30 gigawatts of offshore wind energy capacity by 2030, while protecting biodiversity and promoting ocean co-use. BOEM has made progress on new projects and lease sales on the OCS, including the signing of 27 commercial leases off the East Coast. Moreover, BOEM has approved the Nation's first two major offshore wind projects in the Atlantic, Vineyard Wind 1 and South Fork, and has initiated the review of ten additional projects. BOEM also plans to hold seven lease sales by 2025, including offshore California.

BOEM has been actively engaged in developing renewable energy offshore California since August 18, 2016, when BOEM published a request for interest (RFI) in response to an unsolicited lease request. In 2016, at the request of then California Governor Edmund G. Brown,

BOEM established the BOEM California Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force (California Task Force or Task Force).

BOEM's offshore wind energy authorization process is a staged, multi-year decision-making process comprising four distinct phases: (1) planning and analysis; (2) leasing; (3) site assessment; and (4) construction and operations. Public and stakeholder input opportunities are offered throughout the process, and BOEM coordinates OCS renewable energy activities with its Federal, State, local, and federally recognized Tribal government partners through BOEM-led intergovernmental renewable energy task forces.

Between late 2016 and September 2018, BOEM and the State conducted outreach and engagement with Tribes; Federal, State, and local agencies; elected officials; commercial fishing communities; mariners; academics; environmental groups; and the public. The collected input and feedback informed the publication of a call for information and nominations (Call) on October 19, 2018, to obtain nominations from companies interested in commercial wind energy leases within certain areas offshore central and northern California. In addition to nominations, BOEM sought public input on the potential for wind energy development in the Call areas, as well as any impacts on environmental resources in and other uses of the areas. These public comments were important for improving BOEM's understanding of the site conditions, resources, and multiple uses in the Call areas as well as for informing BOEM's subsequent decision whether to offer all or part of the Call areas for commercial wind leasing. BOEM, the State of California, various California elected officials, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the Department of Defense (DOD) continue to have discussions and conduct tribal, ocean user, and stakeholder outreach in the effort to accommodate offshore wind development while protecting ecologically and culturally significant areas and DOD's mission requirements. On May 25, 2021, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, National

Climate Advisor Gina McCarthy, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Dr. Colin Kahl, and California Governor Gavin Newsom announced a joint commitment to advance areas for wind energy development offshore the northern and central coasts of California, enabling a path forward for the Humboldt Call Area and areas within and adjacent to the Morro Bay Call Area. This agreement was the result of years of collaboration between the Departments of the Interior and Defense to find areas offshore California that are compatible with DOD's training and testing operations. As part of this announcement, the Department acknowledged the critical nature of current and future military testing, training and operations and acknowledged that ensuring the operational integrity thereof is a national security imperative. BOEM is committed to working with DOD to ensure long-term protection of military testing, training and operations, while pursuing clean energy development.

Proposed Sale Notice

On May 26, 2022, the Department of the Interior announced proposed auction details and lease terms for offshore wind energy development in the Morro Bay Wind Energy Area (WEA) and Humboldt WEA, located offshore central and northern California, respectively. The California proposed sale notice (PSN) included a 60-day public comment period ending August 1, 2022; provided detailed information about potential areas that could be available for leasing; and proposed lease provisions and conditions, auction details, and the lease execution process. The PSN included three proposed lease areas in the Morro Bay WEA off central California and two proposed lease areas in the Humboldt WEA off northern California for potential commercial wind energy development.

The proposed lease areas in the Humboldt and Morro Bay WEAs consist of approximately 373,268 acres (583 square miles) and have the potential to unlock over 4.5 gigawatts of offshore

wind energy, which would power more than 1.5 million homes and create thousands of new jobs. This would also assist California in reaching its goal of up to 5 gigawatts of offshore wind energy by 2030 and 25 gigawatts by 2045.

The PSN included lease stipulations and bidding credits to promote the expansion of a well-trained workforce that is ready to construct offshore wind projects and to further engagement with local communities, Tribes, and other ocean users. The stipulations would require lessees to make every reasonable effort to enter into a project labor agreement covering the construction phase of any project proposed for a leased area and to submit to BOEM a semi-annual report about engagement activities with Tribes, underserved communities, and other ocean users that describes how those activities inform their projects. The PSN also proposed bidding credits for developers to invest in workforce training and supply chain development and to enter into community benefit agreements with a local community or ocean users. Together, these innovative lease stipulations and bidding credits are intended to help support the Administration's broader objectives that offshore wind projects create good paying jobs, develop a domestic supply chain, and deliver benefits to underserved communities. BOEM is in the process of reviewing the hundreds of comments received from all ocean stakeholders and will factor these in as we move forward with the final sale notice (FSN).

Fisheries

BOEM works extensively and in coordination with NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to engage the commercial fishing industry through meetings and workshops throughout the offshore wind authorization process. We use the best available fishing data, science, and traditional knowledge to inform actions at every step of the process. Accurate data is key to our decision making, and since 2009, BOEM has awarded approximately $18 million for 36

fisheries-related studies offshore the U.S. Pacific coast and Hawaii. These studies have focused on harvested fish populations, essential fish habitat, potential impacts to fish and fisheries from various stressors (e.g., noise, electromagnetic fields), and potential impacts to the commercial and recreational fishing industry from offshore development. These studies also identified mitigation measures to reduce conflicts between offshore energy development and fisheries.

BOEM meets monthly with NMFS and directly engages with fishing stakeholders and governing bodies such as the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC), and the PFMC's Ad Hoc Marine Planning Committee in addition to a variety of other fishing associations. We will continue to work closely with all fisheries stakeholders to continue our productive dialogue and meaningful engagement as we work through site-specific issues relevant to the various West Coast fishery sectors.

Challenges

More than half of the Nation's offshore wind resources occur above deep-water ocean areas. Traditional, fixed-bottom, offshore wind turbine foundations are not economically feasible in these deep-water areas. Floating wind turbines have potential, but floating turbine technology is newer and less deployed worldwide than that of fixed-bottom foundations. Floating wind turbines can help harness offshore wind energy that was once thought unattainable above deep ocean waters, especially in the Pacific.

Developing floating wind turbine technology positions the Nation to become a world leader in the industry, and we are proud to lead our federal partners in this endeavor. The Biden-Harris administration has taken an all of government approach and, in doing so, BOEM works closely with our colleagues in the Department of Energy as we work collectively to advance a domestically sourced offshore wind supply chain, address transmission, and other initiatives such

as technology development of floating wind. BOEM is committed to supporting the establishment of a durable supply chain in the United States that can sustain both the floating and fixed structures that developers will be using during the safe, expeditious, and orderly development of OCS wind energy.

However, developing the infrastructure to support renewable energy offshore California is a challenge that requires significant onshore and offshore investments, as well as physical and oceanographic observations and data acquisition, responsible site planning and construction, economic studies, and effective transmission solutions. Without the ability to economically deliver the energy these facilities generate, offshore wind projects will not reach their full potential. Transmission permitting involves many different parties and BOEM is taking a collaborative approach to understand the challenges each party faces and to develop creative solutions.

While the offshore wind resource is best on the northern coast of California, transmission is very limited for the full buildout of the Humboldt WEA, which could generate up to 1.6 gigawatts. BOEM, in coordination with State partners in California, has contributed to studies to better understand transmission concerns, including work conducted by California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt's (Cal Poly Humboldt) Schatz Energy Center. That work assessed the feasibility, scale, and transmission options for offshore wind power generation along the northern California coast. Cal Poly Humboldt identified potential pathways and estimated costs for alternative transmission interconnections of various offshore wind generation scenarios up to the full buildout of the Humboldt WEA, assuming full deliverability of wind energy throughout the year. BOEM continues to coordinate with partners on potential solutions to the challenges of developing clean energy offshore California.

Way Ahead

BOEM continues to coordinate planning for offshore renewable energy activities through the California Task Force. The fifth meeting of this Task Force was held on June 3, 2022, during the PSN public comment period, and included updates on offshore wind energy activities, information and discussion opportunities on the California PSN, and next steps in the BOEM authorization process. This was a valuable opportunity for stakeholders, ocean users, and members of the public to comment on the five proposed lease areas that could be available for leasing and on the proposed conditions and stipulations that will be incorporated into the FSN. BOEM plans to publish the FSN later this year. The FSN will provide the date, time, and final terms and conditions for the lease sale and will include a list of the companies that have legally, technically, and financially qualified to participate in the lease sale.

Conclusion

BOEM is entrusted with the safe and responsible development of offshore energy resources for the Nation; we are privileged and honored to fulfill that trust every day in every decision. We remain committed to active engagement with all stakeholders and partners to ensure the responsible development of these shared renewable energy resources on the OCS, and we will continue to keep the Subcommittee informed of our progress. I look forward to answering your questions today.