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Statement of
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(Real Property)

Before the House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Energy and Minerals
Power in the Pacific: Unlocking Offshore Wind Energy for the American West

September 08, 2022

Chairman Lowenthal, Ranking Member Stauber, members of the subcommittee, Representative Carbajal, and Representative Panetta. I am Ron Tickle, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Real Property. On behalf of the Department of Defense (DoD), I would like to thank the House Committee on Natural Resources for convening this meeting and for your efforts to consider the national defense mission in offshore energy siting decisions. As the Committee knows, DoD has a significant presence in Central California.

DoD recognizes that climate change poses an existential threat to national security. We have worked with the partners on this team for years and remain committed to finding a solution that protects military operations while supporting aggressive domestic renewable energy goals.

DoD has been engaged with Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) in discussions of wind energy development off the coast of California for almost a decade. BOEM's October 10, 2018 Federal Register Call for Information and Nomination notice reflected DoD's previous analysis for the three areas identified: The Diablo Canyon Call Area, The Morro Bay Call Area and the Humboldt Call Area. The Diablo Canyon area is heavily utilized by multiple DoD components and based upon current and future expected use, previous assessments have found development there to be incompatible with the wide array of critical DoD activities. The Humboldt Call Area on the north coast is currently designated as needing "Site-Specific Stipulations" by DoD, meaning that while DoD may request mitigation measures, offshore wind has been determined to be compatible with its missions. The notice also indicated that DoD was reviewing additional detailed project information supplied by the offshore wind energy industry to determine if any of the areas previously identified by DoD as incompatible in the Morro Bay Call Area may be identified as compatible after further analyses.

Following BOEM's 2018 notice to pursue offshore wind in California, DoD worked collaboratively with our local, State and Federal partners, along with ocean users, such as the commercial fishing industry, to explore opportunities to site offshore wind along the California Central Coast, specifically in the Morro Bay area.

To support broad stakeholder interests, in August 2019, Representative Carbajal, in collaboration with Representative Panetta, assembled a multi-agency Working Group to explore the "art of the possible" for siting offshore wind along the California Central Coast. DoD greatly appreciated being invited to participate in this vital working group to share and understand the diverse landscape of stakeholder interests to address the climate crisis, while protecting ocean user equities and DoD's vital National Security objectives.

Efforts by all parties led to the identification of an area in Morro Bay that is referred to as the "Morro Bay 399" area. DoD supports BOEM's plans to lease within the area, provided certain mitigation measures are included in the lease sales and DoD is assured long-term protection of training, testing, and operations elsewhere off the central coast. We were pleased with the Department of Interior's (DOI) May 2021 statement calling the operational integrity of military testing and training in the Morro Bay a national security imperative and DOI committed

to work with DoD to ensure long-term protection of area military operations while pursuing new domestic clean energy resources. The DoD remains committed to both goals.

The DoD conducts multiple missions in the vicinity of the Morro Bay 399 area. Maintaining capabilities in California is key to ensuring the highest readiness for our fighting forces. The advancements in warfighting capabilities designed to match peer adversaries require more testing and training space than ever before. Many of these activities support US Northern Command and US Indo-Pacific Command. Of key importance, Carrier Strike Group Training along the California Central Coast is required prior to deployment of a Carrier Strike Group into the Pacific theater. Other critical missions conducted in this area include:

- The Navy utilizes the airspace daily for Strike Fighter Wing and Joint Strike Fighter Wing training;
- The Navy Third Fleet performs Integrated Carrier Strike Group training and certification;
- The Point Mugu Sea Range (PSMR) conducts unique research, test, and evaluation.

The California wind development proposal for the Morro Bay area is wholly located within military Warning Areas. Development may cause impacts on DoD activities that DoD itself cannot completely mitigate. However, DoD recognizes the national importance of renewable energy development and supports BOEM's plans to lease within the Morro Bay 399 Area, based on assurances of long-term protection of training, testing and operations.

We are committed to working with BOEM to develop solutions that support both missions, along with the many other important interests represented in this room. Thank you for your commitment and I would be glad to answer any questions.