



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Washington, DC 20240

SEP 30 2022

The Honorable Alan Lowenthal
Chair, House Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Lowenthal:

Enclosed are responses prepared by the Department of the Interior to the questions for the record submitted following the September 8, 2022, oversight hearing entitled, "Power in the Pacific: Unlocking Offshore Wind Energy for the American West."

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to you on this matter.

Sincerely,

Christopher P. Salotti
Legislative Counsel
Office of Congressional and
Legislative Affairs

Enclosure
cc: The Honorable Pete Stauber
Ranking Member

**Questions for the Record
Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources
House Natural Resources Committee
September 8, 2022**

Questions from Ranking Member Stauber

Question 1: Given your experience with timelines for wind energy development off the East Coast, what concerns do you have about achieving offshore wind deployment in the Pacific prior to 2030 to meet the wind energy goals of the Biden administration?

Response: The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) expects to proceed with the California Final Sale Notice and offshore wind lease sale later this year, putting us in a good position to help meet the wind energy goals set by the Administration as well as the goals set by the State of California.

Transmission continues to be a challenge in achieving these goals in the Pacific. BOEM is currently engaged with the U.S. Department of Energy to study and make recommendations for transmission planning to allow for 30 gigawatts of offshore wind by 2030 and increased capacity beyond that. This includes the investigation of options such as grid upgrades, regional transmission backbones, meshed systems, and other shared infrastructure that could help minimize conflict while optimizing transmission solutions.

Question 1a: To meet the administration's deadlines, how long do you anticipate the interagency review process will take? Will there be any efforts to expedite permitting to enable faster leasing and construction of wind farms in the region?

Response: Interagency review is an indispensable part of the leasing and development process. We work with our partner agencies throughout the planning, leasing, and review processes to identify potential conflicts and develop sensible mitigations. The thorough and diligent review process for an offshore wind project's Construction and Operation Plan generally takes two years, and BOEM expects that will be the case for projects offshore California. Recent MOUs between BOEM and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) should also help keep the review process timely. For all offshore wind projects, BOEM is committed to a transparent and inclusive review process that uses the best available science, knowledge, and information for decision-making.

Question 2: In response to one of my questions during the hearing, you said that BOEM does not have primary responsibility for onshore wind energy transmission infrastructure or infrastructure through state waters. You went on to say that decisions regarding where, and under what circumstances, transmission siting is allowed will be left to the states.

a. What does BOEM propose to enable the buildout of wind energy transmission, should a state decline construction in areas necessary to connect to the energy grid?

Response: The successful build-out of offshore wind energy transmission will require a collaborative approach between state and federal agencies. BOEM works closely with other Federal partners and states to ensure there is a smart approach to transmission. For example, on the east coast, BOEM has partnered with the U.S. Department of Energy to convene states, industry representatives, Regional Transmission Organizations (RTOs), Tribes, and stakeholders to build towards a planned approach to transmission. On the west coast, BOEM is engaged with

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the State of California, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), and other entities to ensure there is coordination on how to best approach these issues.