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Hearing to examine Pacific offshore wind potential

Rep. Alan Lowenthal (D-Calif.), chair of the Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, during a press conference this year. Francis Chung/E&E News



A House Natural Resources subcommittee will feature testimony from administration officials as California seeks to ramp up its wind power efforts.

BY: **HEATHER RICHARDS**

E&E DAILY | House Democrats will turn the spotlight this week on emerging offshore wind energy initiatives in the Pacific Ocean.

The House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources will hold a field hearing in the coastal city of Morro Bay, Calif. — between San Francisco and Los Angeles — where the Biden administration is preparing to hold the first-ever offshore wind auction for the West Coast.

Officials from the Interior and Defense departments will testify on the next steps for offshore wind in California federal waters, where military concerns have long complicated development.

The hearing, led by subcommittee Chair Alan Lowenthal (D-Calif.), will also feature witnesses from California agencies, as well as local and tribal leaders, fishermen, and labor representatives on the potential benefits and pitfalls of raising turbines in the ocean.

Offshore wind in the Pacific will rely on new floating platform technology to moor wind turbines in the deep waters of California's outer continental shelf.

The industry's growth is considered crucial for the state to meet its decarbonization goals. To that end, state officials recently increased their offshore wind capacity target to 25 gigawatts by 2045, the most ambitious in the country.

The Biden administration's commitment to growing offshore wind nationally has given California's wind outlook a significant boost, with both Morro Bay and Northern California wind energy auctions in development.

But for a state closely associated with its ocean-rooted history, culture, tourism and fishing sectors, offshore wind has raised questions on how to site responsibly; explore risks; and mitigate impacts on the marine environment, fishing and birds ([Energywire](#), Aug. 22).

Schedule: The hearing is Thursday, Sept. 8, at 1 p.m. EDT (10 a.m. PT) at the Morro Bay Community Center, Morro Bay, Calif., and via [webcast](#).

Witnesses:

- Doug Boren, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management regional director.
- Ronald Tickle, deputy assistant secretary of Defense for real property.
- Kourtney Vaccaro, California Energy Commission lead commissioner for offshore wind.
- Dawn Ortiz-Legg, San Luis Obispo County supervisor.
- Debbie Arnold, San Luis Obispo County supervisor.
- Violet Sage, Northern Chumash Tribal Council chair.
- Matthew Arms, Port of Long Beach director of environmental planning.
- Josh Boswell, REACH Central Coast vice president of policy and economic development.
- Jeremiah O'Brien, Morro Bay Commercial Fisherman's Organization vice president.
- Adam Stern, Offshore Wind California executive director.
- Mark Simonin, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 639 business manager.
- Eddie Ahn, Brightline Defense executive director.