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‘A game-changer’: Nearly \$427 million awarded for Humboldt County offshore wind development

Congressman Jared Huffman and Humboldt County Harbor Recreation and Conservation District Chair Greg Dale touted a recent nearly \$427 million grant for offshore wind construction efforts. (Jackson Guilfoil/The Times-Standard)



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Humboldt County saw what is likely the greatest federal investment in decades when the U.S. government awarded a \$426,719,810 grant meant to fund the construction of a terminal in Samoa that would allow turbine construction off the coast.

The grant, awarded to the Humboldt County Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District, aims to create a terminal for the transportation, assemblies, construction and maintenance of floating offshore wind turbines. On Tuesday, U.S. Congressman Jared Huffman (D-San Rafael) touted the grant as a massive regional investment.

“I see it as a game-changer for climate and clean energy. I’m excited because I like the way it aligns with our community needs and the opportunities to do wonderful things for economic development, thousands of good paying jobs, union jobs right here in Humboldt County, partnerships and opportunities for our tribes who are essential partners in this effort, a big step forward toward meeting our climate goals and you know, really any way you look at it, I don’t think anything like this has come along for Humboldt County in decades, certainly not since I came to be your congressman 12 years ago,” Huffman said.

Greg Dale, chair of the harbor district, itemized several spending items he plans to fund using the grant, including dredging, \$51 million for environmental restoration, a paved multipurpose trail, a solar array meant to provide power for project operations and a community benefit program for local tribes, fishermen and residents.

“If I had fireworks right now, I’d have a button and I’d be clicking them every time I said one of these. In this \$426 million grant, there’s \$51 million for environmental restoration,” Dale said. “(The district) probably hasn’t spent \$51 million on environmental restoration on Humboldt Bay in the entirety of the district’s time as a district.”

Dale said the project could serve as a model for the rest of the country, though several hurdles remain before turbines can drop in the water.

Humboldt County currently has no way of transmitting the power generated by wind turbines to the rest of the state on the scale demanded by California’s renewable energy goals and the harbor district has yet to sign a formal agreement with Crowley Wind Services – a company of relative controversy, as Yurok Tribal Chairman [Joseph James published an opinion piece in the Times-Standard](#) urging the district to consider a different partnership given the ongoing lawsuit against Crowley Wind Service’s parent company in civil court over alleged sex trafficking – to operate the port.

The grant was part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act program through the Department of Transportation.

“We have an opportunity to be a model for the rest of the country to really do this well, and do it right,” Dale said.