

September 9, 2021

California lawmakers send Newsom offshore wind bill

BY COLBY BERMEL

California lawmakers on Thursday sent Gov. Gavin Newsom a bill that would direct state regulators to plan for offshore wind development, a major milestone in the Golden State's fight against climate change.

Impact: California, normally a trendsetter on energy and environmental matters, has lagged its East Coast counterparts on offshore wind development. The Assembly unanimously approved [CA AB525 \(21R\)](#) three months after California reached a long-sought agreement with the federal government on where floating turbines would be installed in U.S. waters off the California coast.

Details: AB 525 by Assemblymember David Chiu (D-San Francisco) would require the California Energy Commission to set goals for how much offshore wind should be installed by 2030 and 2045. The CEC would also be required to coordinate with sister agencies on a strategic plan for the permitting and construction of floating turbines. The installation goals would be due Jun. 1, 2022, and the strategic plan would be due Jun. 30, 2023.

Background: Earlier this year, the CEC said in its [CA SB100 \(17R\)](#) report that California needs 10 gigawatts of offshore wind — enough to power 7.5 million homes — to meet the state's requirement of 100 percent clean energy by 2045. AB 525 featured a powerful coalition of supporters, including environmentalists and labor. AB 525 was initially held up when the bill set an installation target, but it was later amended to let regulators, not lawmakers, decide — clearing the way for its smooth passage.

What's next: Newsom has until Oct. 10 to sign or veto AB 525. He is widely expected to sign the bill given his involvement with the May agreement between his administration and the federal government on offshore wind development.