RECHARGE

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'Build wind turbines on US west coast to tap Pacific Rim play', urges floating pioneer Weinstein

Morro Bay will be one of California's pioneering floating wind sites.
Photo: Sean Gallup/Getty Images

Trident Wind chief Alla Weinstein tells Recharge summit supplying giant projects from US east coast factories 'not going to work' as sector experts say industrialisation is next step

By **Andrew Lee**

The international wind industry should view investments on the US west coast as part of a 'Pacific Rim' focused strategy and plan to locate major factories there, a pioneer of the California floating sector told a *Recharge* event in Washington, DC. Alla Weinstein – founder of Trident Winds and among the first movers in west coast floating development – stressed building a regional supply chain will be crucial as the industry prepares to leap into the deep waters off California, where **milestone auctions are poised to open the way for more than 4GW**.

"I would challenge the turbine manufacturers to think about the west coast when you're setting up potential facilities on the east coast," Weinstein, who started floating wind trailblazer Principle Power and launched the WindFloat platform concept in the early-2010s, told the first *Recharge* Global Offshore Wind Summit. "You can't really transport the blades or nacelles from the east to west coast – it's not going to work."

Instead of just a US west coast investment she said the floating wind supply chain needs to think about "the Pacific Rim – maybe there are other opportunities across the Pacific". Weinstein told a panel on the future of floating wind power that the sector will have the ability to become a source not just of baseload power for California, but also of jobs and economic growth thanks to the final assembly ports needed to deploy turbines.

The state is spearheading the US floating wind industry with goals of up-to 5GW of capacity by 2030 and 25GW by 2045. California's potential was also stressed by Jason Folsom, vice president for renewables at Aker Solutions, who told the *Recharge* event that the state's status as the world's fourth-largest economy and massive climate goals could make it "the global epicentre for floating wind".

Folsom said initial suggestions to build floating wind units in Asia and ship them across were not sustainable in the long term, and the state should become a major centre for industrialisation of the sector. "The best way to facilitate good stakeholder engagement is by giving them jobs and economic development opportunity. That's ultimately what offshore wind represents as an economic play. California's a great example of a space that would benefit greatly from localisation, industrialisation of the supply chain. That's how we win in floating wind as an industry."

'Yet to prove how we industrialise'

Industrialisation was more widely cited by the summit panel – moderated by *Recharge* Editor-in-Chief Darius Snieckus – as the key to floating wind success, in terms of meeting the massive demand for capacity coming down the line and getting costs down.

Dominique Roddier – a veteran of the floating sector and CEO of next-generation platform technology developer Ocergy – said while the industry had proven its technologies, what it has not yet proven is "how we industrialise this". "Just saying economies of scale is not going to get you there," Roddier said. "Industrialisation is not saying 'this is our concept how do we build it', it's about… adapting our concept to the existing supply chain." Roddier added that the **pioneering 100MW Salamander project off Scotland** – being developed by Orsted with Simply Blue and offshore oil contractor Subsea7, which has tapped Ocergy for foundation engineering – is planned to be built entirely in the UK, proving that floating can develop local supply chains.

Another British floating project – **the 32MW TwinHub array in the Celtic Sea** off southwest England – will also blaze a trail by becoming the first demonstrator in the sector to break-even after winning a contract-for-difference deal with the UK government, said Adrienne Downey, principal engineer for platform developer Hexicon which is building the array. Downey said floating wind's long-term success will come from maximising its advantages over onshore renewables with "very sharp, very serialisable" technologies that "maximise output, minimise footprint".

Lars Samuelsson, manager for global offshore renewables at classification and standards body the American Bureau of Shipping, said fabrication will be key to the long-term success of the floating sector. “We need to make sure these are fabricated to a consistent standard so we don’t end up with unnecessary uncertainties through the long life of the units,” he told the panel.

Slow-to-evolve government policy and regulatory frameworks are weighing down the floating wind sector’s international industrialisation, with **expectations that current end-of-decade targets for installation of deepwater plant will be missed a wide margin**, according to a new report from 4C Offshore, which points to 8GW being operational by 2030, 12.5% lower than its 2021 predictions.