

# San Luis Obispo Tribune

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## Fisheries and offshore wind farms can coexist in San Luis Obispo County, supervisor says

Sheringham Shoal Offshore Wind Farm, off the east coast of England. WIKIPEDIA



BY DAWN ORTIZ-LEGG

Local leaders on the California Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force are discussing the importance of building offshore wind projects off the San Luis Obispo County Coast.

As a San Luis Obispo County supervisor, I would like to share my position on the recent concerns about offshore wind energy raised by the fishing industry. I support the fishing community as a critical industry for our county, as well as the advancement of renewable energy for the sake of improving grid resiliency and protecting the environment. I am also committed to a transparent, collaborative and stakeholder-driven review of these projects.

Recently, the Board of Supervisors passed a resolution recognizing the future of offshore wind developments in the county, showing support for its produced benefits, all in good faith. We want to create solutions and ensure the review of offshore wind in our area incorporates feedback and concerns from our community. The voices in the fishing industry will be heard in this process.

California is known globally as a leader in clean energy; yet, we have not successfully tapped into one of our greatest assets—the ocean. The East Coast’s offshore wind development is taking off, and California is falling behind. However, we can learn from successes on the East Coast and bring these benefits to San Luis Obispo County.

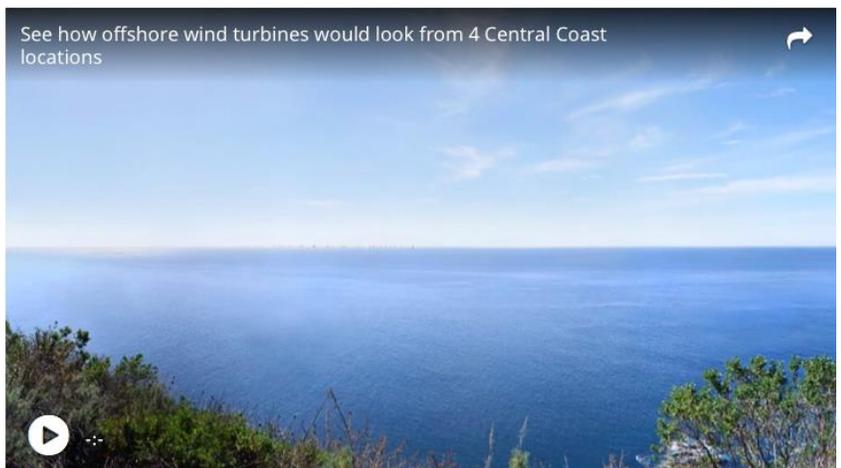
Offshore wind has proven to have minimal impact on marine life. The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management [found no alteration of the character or habitats of the ecosystem](#), so the fishing industry in our county will continue to thrive given our commitment to appropriate mitigation measures to offset any potential local impacts. Likewise, the [most significant threat](#) to our ocean is climate change, and this clean energy source helps fight against it.

Offshore wind developments will attract more fish to our coastlines. A [study by the Helmholtz Centre for Materials and Coastal Research](#) found that wind farms serve as artificial reefs, creating new habitats and food sources for fish. The increase of fish will provide an even more sustainable future for fishing, proving that both a healthy fishing and offshore energy industries can co-exist off our shoreline. It does not have to be one or the other.

A new proposal for a wind farm off the coast of San Luis Obispo County would move turbines 15 to 20 miles offshore rather than 30. Here's a look at how the turbines would appear from four coastal locations. BY BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT

We don't need to choose between a healthy fishing industry and large-scale offshore wind in SLO County. In the same way SLO County's utility-scale solar projects were developed, we know a collaborative process creates projects that produce clean energy and enhance biological resources.

Every project proposed in our waters will be carefully examined with county residents in mind. Projects will not occur in a vacuum, kept behind closed doors, or decided unilaterally. To show transparency, the fishing industry and other key stakeholders across the county will have a chance to share input and provide feedback.



As your local representative, I am wholeheartedly committed to taking a balanced approach to the innovation before us and making decisions that benefit the entire county. There is a need for renewable energy and the fishing industry, as both provide benefits for the community and ways to make a living.

Offshore wind energy is another partner that can result in local benefits, and we can all find a way to co-exist in San Luis Obispo County.

*Dawn Ortiz-Legg represents District 3 on the Board of Supervisors.*