

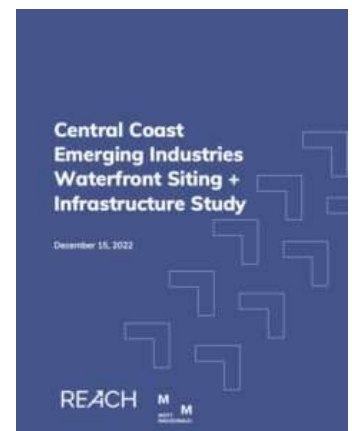
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STUDY IDENTIFIES OPTIONS TO ADVANCE CENTRAL COAST OFFSHORE WIND AND SPACE INDUSTRIES

Collaboration on infrastructure assessment paves the way for California's climate, innovation and jobs goals

The Central Coast has an array of opportunities to enhance its waterfront infrastructure to support the growth of the offshore wind and space industries, a new study finds.

The findings of the “Central Coast Emerging Industries Waterfront Siting and Infrastructure Study” will inform critical next steps in planning for offshore wind development following last week’s federal auction of three lease areas off the coast of Morro Bay and for increased launch activity at Vandenberg Space Force Base.



“These two industries are poised to bring hundreds, potentially thousands, of good-paying jobs and other economic benefits to the region, but each needs supporting infrastructure to reach its full potential,” REACH President/CEO Melissa James said. “Our region has come together with this study to surface opportunities and guide discussion on how the Central Coast can play a role in these emerging industries and unlock investment.”

The study was funded by the Counties of San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara and the City of Morro Bay, with REACH serving as project administrator. The global engineering firm Mott MacDonald conducted the technical analysis, with review by a technical steering committee

represented by the three funding agencies, the National Renewable Energy Lab (NREL), the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) and Space Launch Delta 30.

“Both offshore wind and space launch are paramount to our nation’s future — offshore wind in advancing clean energy goals and bolstering energy resilience, and space launch for national security, scientific discovery, commercial applications and generally retaining the nation’s competitive edge in space,” Congressman Salud Carbajal said. “The Central Coast is charting its own course with this study, enabling informed decision-making at the local, state and national level and staking its place at the forefront of these two vital industries.”

Key findings: Offshore wind

The study outlines the potential for a variety of facilities along the Central Coast, from small boat docks and equipment storage to large facilities where turbines are assembled. A network of such facilities are needed to support a range of activities across the three lease areas, the report states. The options involve varying levels of complexity and cost, ranging from \$10-40 million for smaller facilities to more than a billion dollars for a larger facility. All options require investment, regulatory permitting coordination and stakeholder engagement.

“As we prepare to stand up an entire new industry with the development of floating offshore wind farms off California’s coast, it’s becoming crystal clear that we’ll need a network of ports and support facilities up and down the coast,” Adam Stern, executive director of Offshore Wind California, said. “We applaud this effort to identify potential locations in close proximity to one of the two areas opened for development in last week’s historic auction, as well as the Central Coast’s initiative in shaping the role it will play in jump-starting an industry that’s critical to our nation’s energy future.”

The study, which also lays out governance and financing models, feeds into work across several fronts: SLO County’s plans for \$1 million in state funding for infrastructure, engagement with the three winning offshore wind developers and coordination with both the state AB 525 planning process and the federal West Coast Port Strategy Study that NREL is leading. Community dialogue and engagement with tribal, fishing and other Central Coast stakeholders will be essential in exploring these options further.

“This study provides an important piece as we develop the roadmap for offshore wind on the Pacific Coast, outlining scenarios for how the Central Coast fits into the larger picture of port infrastructure the floating offshore wind industry needs to

thrive and scale,” said Walter Musial, principal researcher at NREL. “We appreciate the opportunity to collaborate with the Central Coast on this important work.”

Key findings: Space

The study identifies two scenarios for upgrading the Vandenberg boat dock to support an increase in launch activity and related operations. The existing infrastructure, used to barge in rockets and other components too large to travel by land or air, faces significant constraints.

One scenario involves modest updates to improve reliability, with an estimated cost in the tens of millions of dollars. The second details more substantial upgrades that would put the waterfront infrastructure at Vandenberg’s Western Range on par with the Eastern Range at Cape Canaveral. That scenario, which includes enabling more efficient return of reusable rockets from droneship landings, could cost several hundred million dollars, the study estimates.

Those findings will be carried forward into the infrastructure planning the Vandenberg MOU group is engaged in and supports broader efforts to enhance California’s space capabilities that will be advanced by the state’s new Space Industry Task Force.

“As the West Coast’s sole rocket launch range, Vandenberg stands out as a singular asset among California’s rich aerospace ecosystem,” said Kaina Pereira, senior advisor for business development at GO-Biz. “We are proud to be home to a third of the nation’s space companies and are excited about supporting the future of this industry into the next generation and beyond.”

Regional perspectives on this unique collaboration

Santa Barbara County Third District Supervisor and Board Chair Joan Hartmann applauded the completion of the study: “The Waterfront Siting and Infrastructure Study is an essential step in informing decision making and preparing for new opportunities to advance the offshore renewable energy and commercial space industries. The collaborative support for this study from both Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties, as well as the City of Morro Bay, is indicative of the tremendous economic benefit and job creation that these industries could bring to the region.”

“This is a positive first step in realizing the full potential of our region when it comes to space capabilities and offshore wind,” said Santa Barbara County Fourth District Supervisor Bob Nelson. “The unique qualities of the Central Coast coupled

with the existing infrastructure make it a desired location. There are significant opportunities to encourage public-private partnerships that can and should result in full-time, good-paying jobs throughout the area.”

*“The development of the offshore wind and commercial space industries along our coastline has the potential to be transformational,” said **County of San Luis Obispo Supervisor Dawn Ortiz-Legg**. “This study helps us better understand the infrastructure that may be needed for our region to realize the job creation and economic benefits from these industries.”*

***Morro Bay City Manager Scott Collins** said: “The City of Morro Bay supported this pre-feasibility assessment of opportunities for the new floating offshore wind industry to enter the economic landscape of the Central Coast with the greatest potential to grow jobs, develop the workforce and supply chain, and enhance existing infrastructure. We look forward to participating in further analysis and community engagement on the menu of opportunities identified in the report.”*

Read the full study.

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