

Permitting Offshore Wind Port Infrastructure Projects



Cal Poly
Humboldt.

July 10, 2025

Presented by Awbrey Yost, Schatz Energy Research Center

Panelists:

Amy Vierra, Senior Environmental Scientist, California State Lands Commission

Catherine Mitchell, North Coast Harbor Analyst, California Coastal Commission

Dani Ziff, South Coast District Supervisor, California Coastal Commission

Goals for the report



- Map key permit processes for offshore wind staging and integration port infrastructure projects
- Identify Tribal consultation and public engagement requirements
- Support informed decision-making across agencies, Tribal Nations, impacted communities, and developers
- Facilitate discussion on where we are in the permit process and how to get involved and coordinate

Today's agenda



1. Overview of port infrastructure needs for offshore wind
2. Key findings of the Permitting for Port Infrastructure to Support Offshore Wind in California report, and framework for key permitting processes
3. Panel discussion with California State Lands Commission and California Coastal Commission staff
4. Q&A

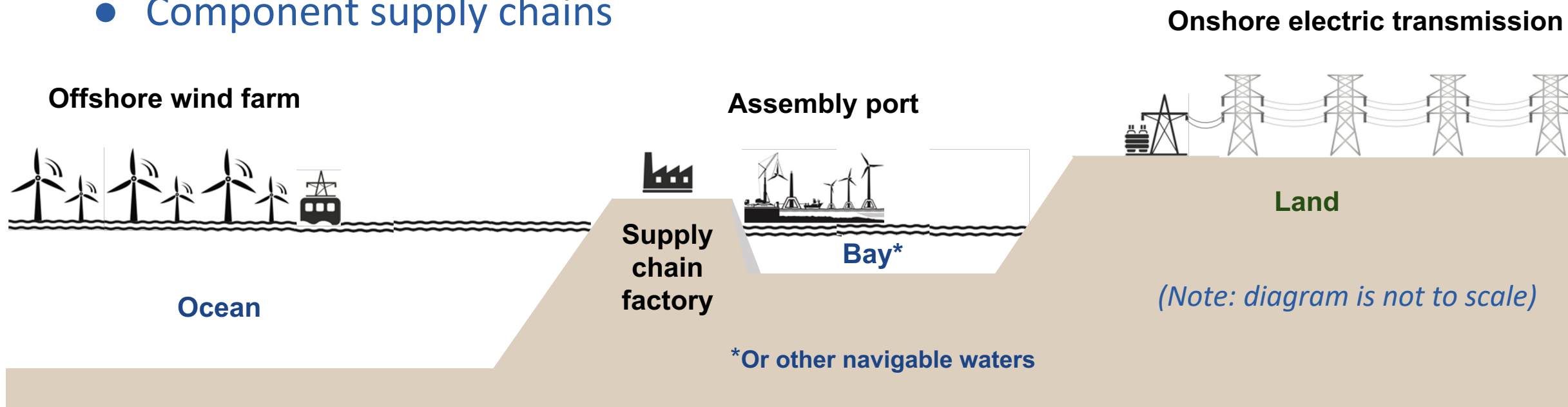
- Moderator: Awbrey Yost, Senior Policy Analyst, Schatz Energy Research Center
- Amy Vierra, Renewable Energy Specialist, California State Lands Commission
- Catherine Mitchell, North Coast Harbor Analyst, California Coastal Commission
- Dani Ziff, South Coast District Supervisor, California Coastal Commission

Offshore wind port infrastructure needs

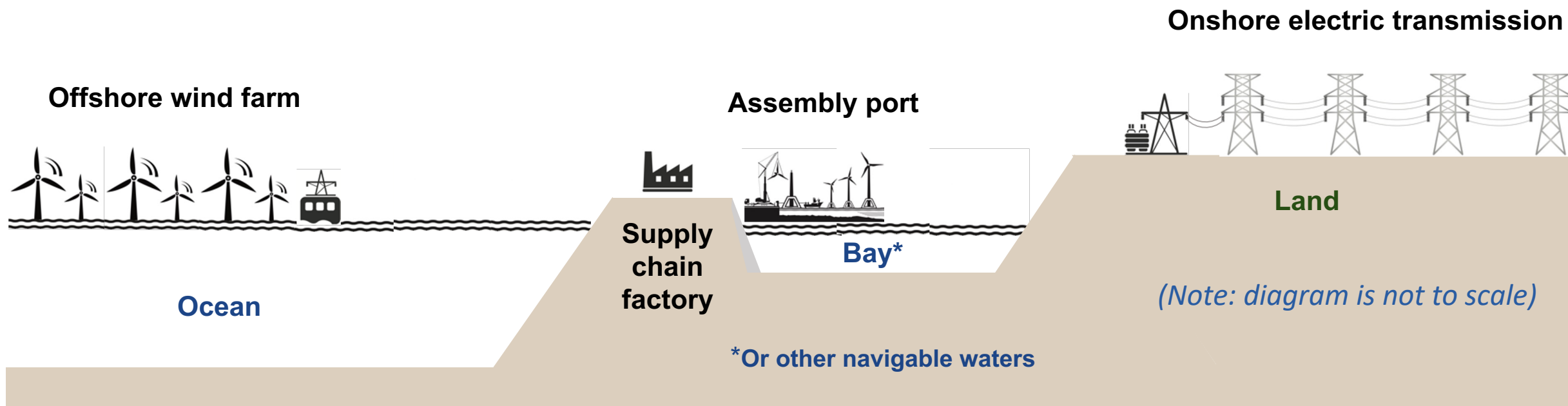


Offshore wind development involves four interdependent endeavors:

- Offshore wind farms
- Port infrastructure
- Electric transmission
- Component supply chains



Each of these four types of infrastructure involves its own set of developers and its own permitting processes



Three primary port types for OSW

Staging & integration (S&I)



Manufacturing/fabrication (M/F)



Operations & maintenance (O&M)



Graphics by Moffatt & Nichol (S&I and M/F) and Reach & Mott MacDonald (O&M)

Proposed S&I projects



- Ports of Long Beach, Los Angeles, and Humboldt the only good candidate sites within existing ports
- Two currently proposed projects in Wigi (Humboldt Bay) and the Port of Long Beach

- Proposed by the Port of Long Beach
- In San Pedro Bay within the Port of Long Beach on the ancestral lands of the Tongva people
- Located adjacent to communities who disproportionately experience negative health, economic, and pollution impacts
- Likely to include three staging and integration sites, two foundation assembly sites, a transportation corridor, a sinking basin, wet storage areas, and a wharf and piers
- Creation of 400 acres of new land from fill for terminal

Port of Long Beach Pier Wind Project Concept



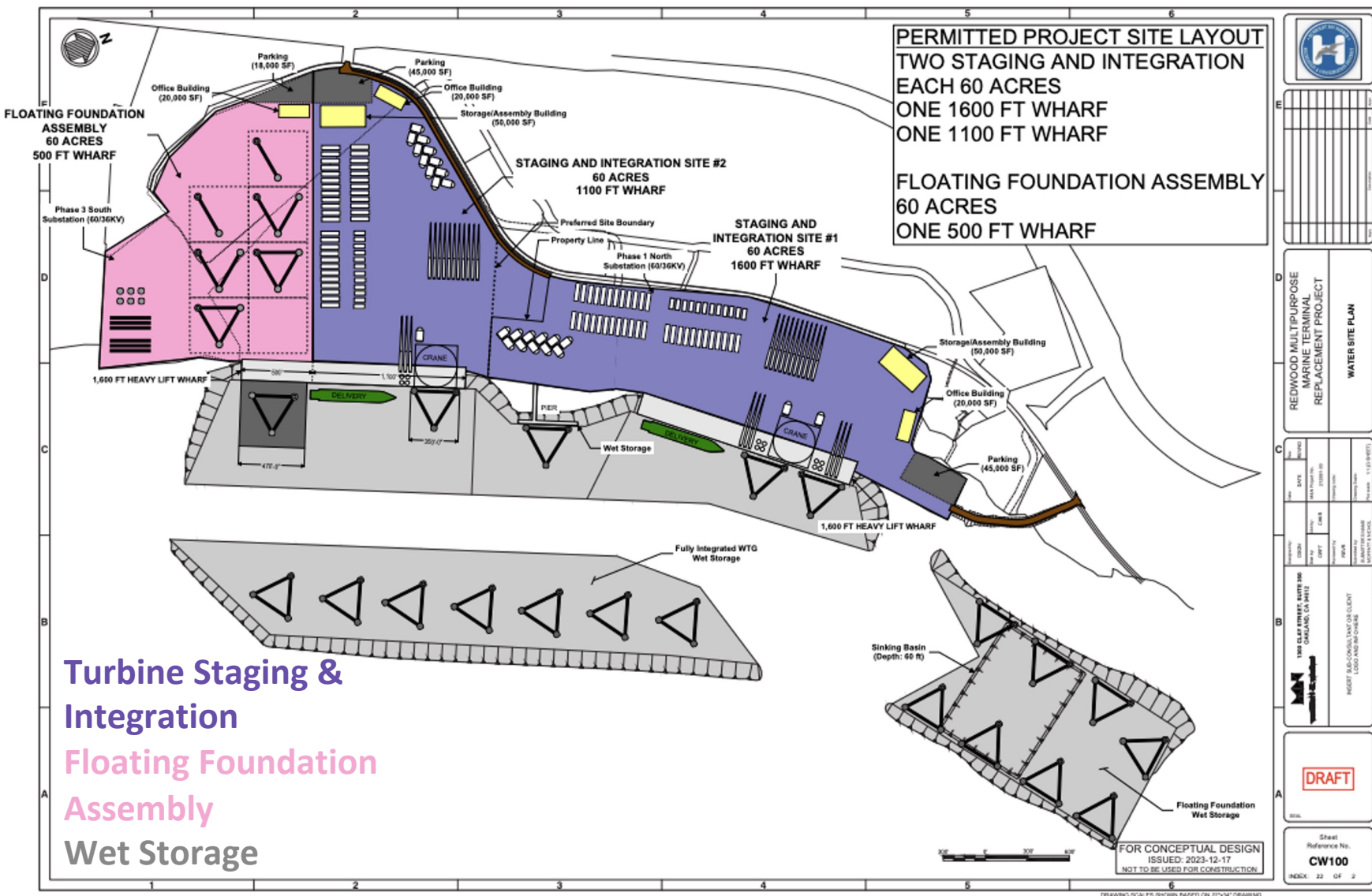
Concept for the Port of Long Beach
Pier Wind project (Moffat & Nichol)

Humboldt Bay Harbor District Project



- Proposed by Humboldt Bay Harbor District
- In Wigi (Humboldt Bay) in Humboldt County on the ancestral lands of the Wiyot people
- Located directly adjacent to Tuluwat and existing residential communities
- Likely to include two staging and integration sites, a floating foundation assembly site, wet storage areas, a sinking basin, and habitat restoration
- Remediation of hazardous substances and significant dredging

Humboldt Bay Harbor District Project Concept



Concept for the
Humboldt Bay
Harbor District
project (ICF)

Permitting for Port Infrastructure to Support Offshore Wind in California

Published May 2025

- Main report
- Appendices
- Summary report

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Permitting for Port Infrastructure to Support Offshore Wind in California



Left: Proposed site for the Pier Wind Terminal Development Project, Port of Long Beach (Cheli 2025). Right: Proposed site for the Humboldt Bay Offshore Wind Heavy Lift Multipurpose Marine Terminal Project, Wigi (Humboldt Bay) (Jacobson 2025).

This report was prepared by Awbrey Yost and Arne Jacobson of the Schatz Energy Research Center. It was published by the Schatz Energy Research Center in May 2025.

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- High level findings relating to permitting process and timeline
- Key regulatory processes:
 - Public trust lands review
 - Coastal Act review
- Tribal consultation and engagement
- Public notice and engagement

Key permit process and timeline findings



- Permitting for staging and integration projects is complex, potentially requiring over **20 authorizations** from:
 - Four to six federal agencies
 - Three to five state agencies, and
 - Two or more local agencies
- Each agency has distinct regulatory processes and requirements
- Multiple authorizations may be required from a single agency

- It will likely take project proponents **at least three to four years** from the commencement of environmental review to obtain all authorizations
- Based on statutory and regulatory deadlines
- **In practice, the timeline is likely to be longer** due to extensions of deadlines, appeals, and other actions that can extend the time for obtaining authorizations

California Energy Commission's Opt-In Certification Program (Assembly Bill 205, 2022)

- Expedites environmental review
- Consolidates and expedites permitting

California Energy Commission's Opt-In Certification Program

- Staging and integration projects may be eligible as facilities that assemble specialized components and systems that are integral to renewable energy
 - i.e. floating foundations and offshore wind turbine systems

California Energy Commission's Opt-In Certification Program

- However, the proponents of the proposed staging and integration projects have not opted into this process to date
- Why haven't the Port of Long Beach and Humboldt Bay Harbor District opted in? Open question
 - Located in bays and ports where many individual state permits still needed (e.g., CCC, SLC, SWRCB)
 - Would have needed to opt in before initiating environmental review for optimal benefits
 - Lack of certainty around applicability of program
 - Other factors?



Key permit processes

- Environmental review is required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Proposed project lead agencies:
 - **Port of Long Beach project:** Port of Long Beach (CEQA), U.S. Army Corps (NEPA)
 - **Humboldt Bay Harbor District project:** Humboldt Bay Harbor District project (CEQA), U.S. Maritime Administration (NEPA, likely but no formal notice)

Public trust lands



California State Lands Commission

Coastal Act



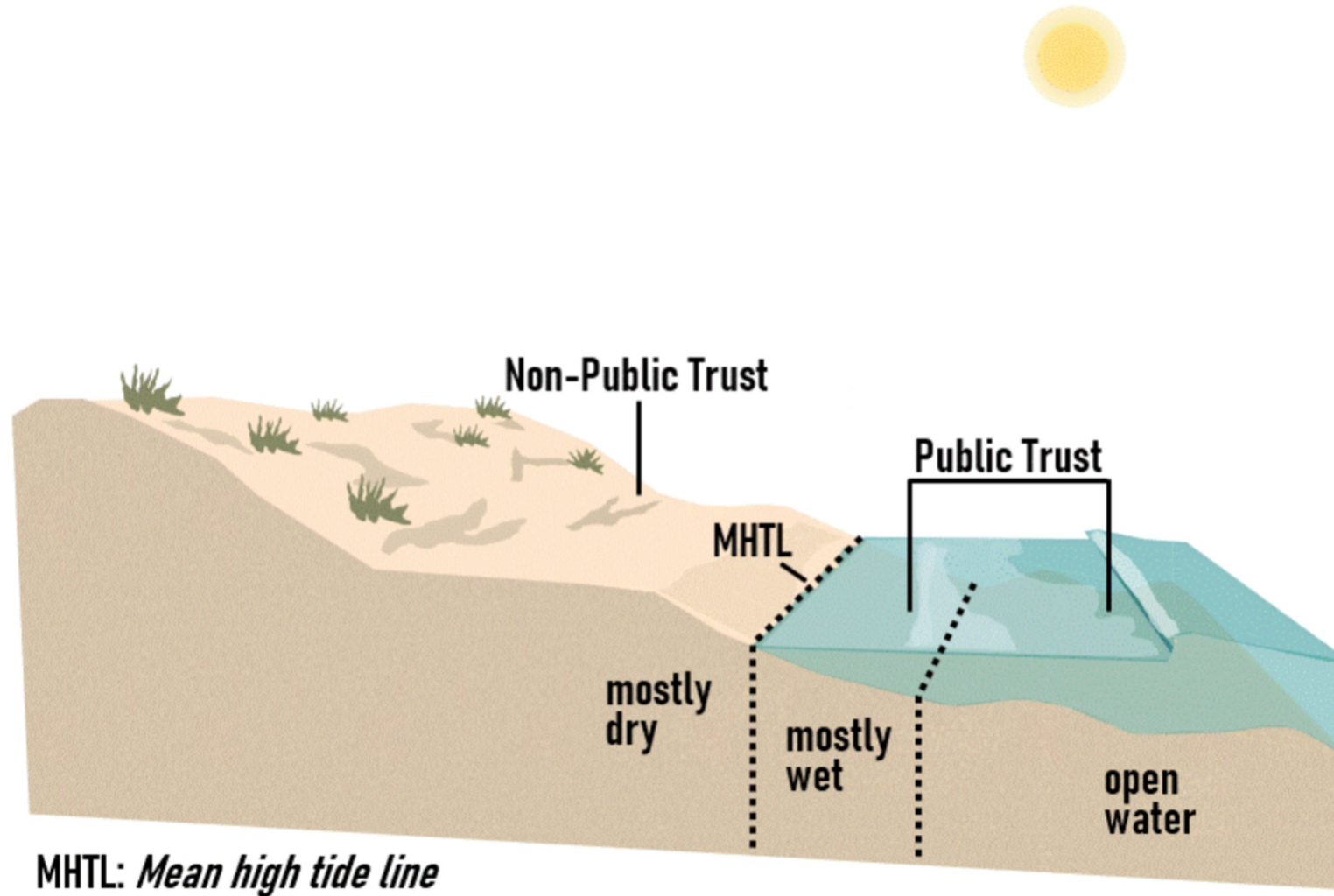
California Coastal Commission

California State Lands Commission
Public trust lands
Owns and manages public trust lands

Where each agency has jurisdiction

California State Lands Commission	California Coastal Commission
Public trust lands	Coastal zone
Owens and manages public trust lands	Regulates development in the coastal zone

Public trust tidelands and submerged lands

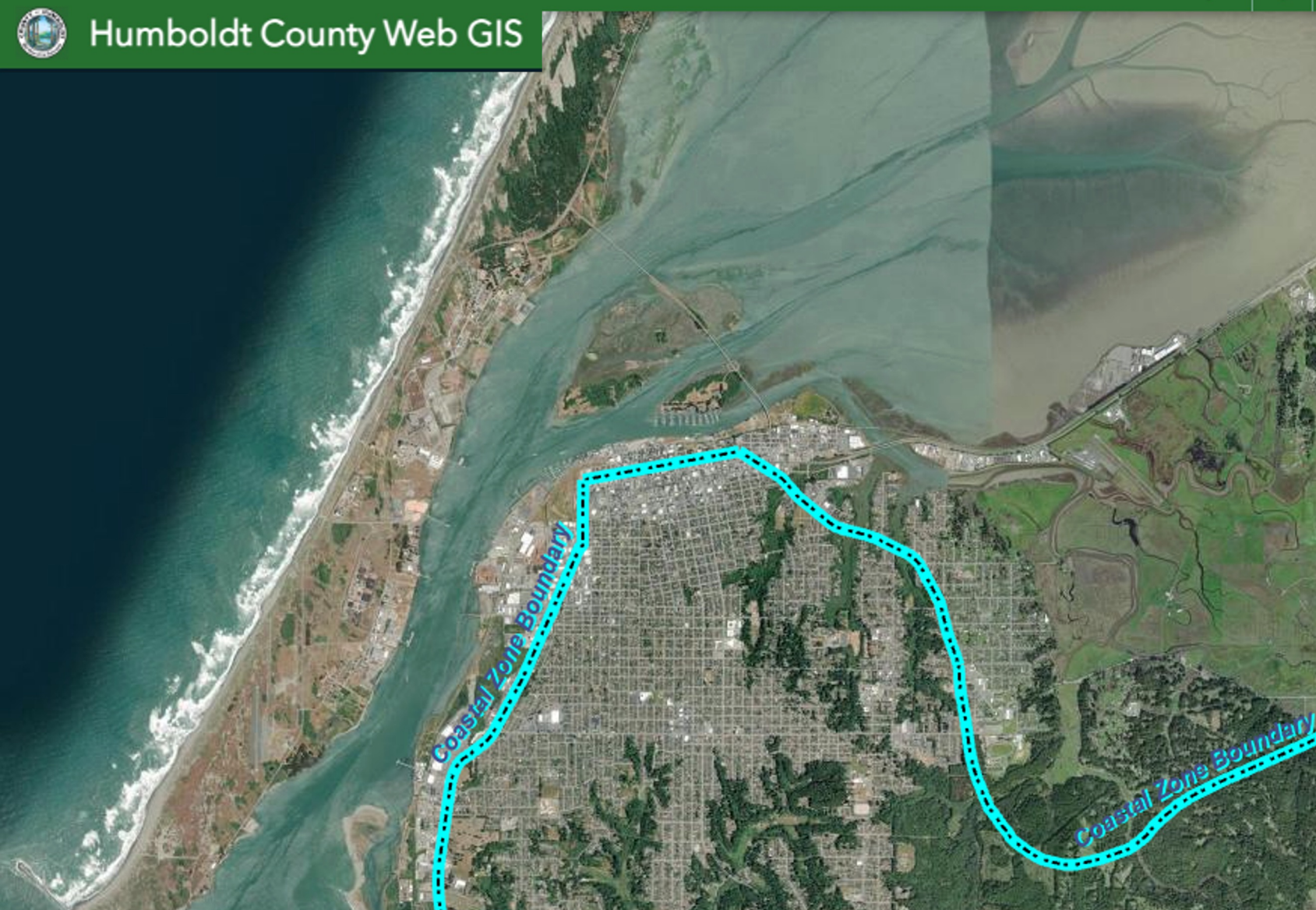


Generally owned and managed (e.g. leases) by the California State Lands Commission

Graphic by Jeremy Smith, California Coastal Commission

- Under the common law **public trust doctrine**, the State has an **affirmative duty to protect state tidelands and submerged lands** for a broad range of public uses, including
 - navigation
 - fishing
 - boating
 - water-oriented recreation
 - public access
 - environmental preservation and restoration

Coastal zone



Coastal Commission regulates development in the **coastal zone**—

seaward to the outer limit of state waters, and inland from several hundred feet from the shore to as much as five miles inland in areas of special significance

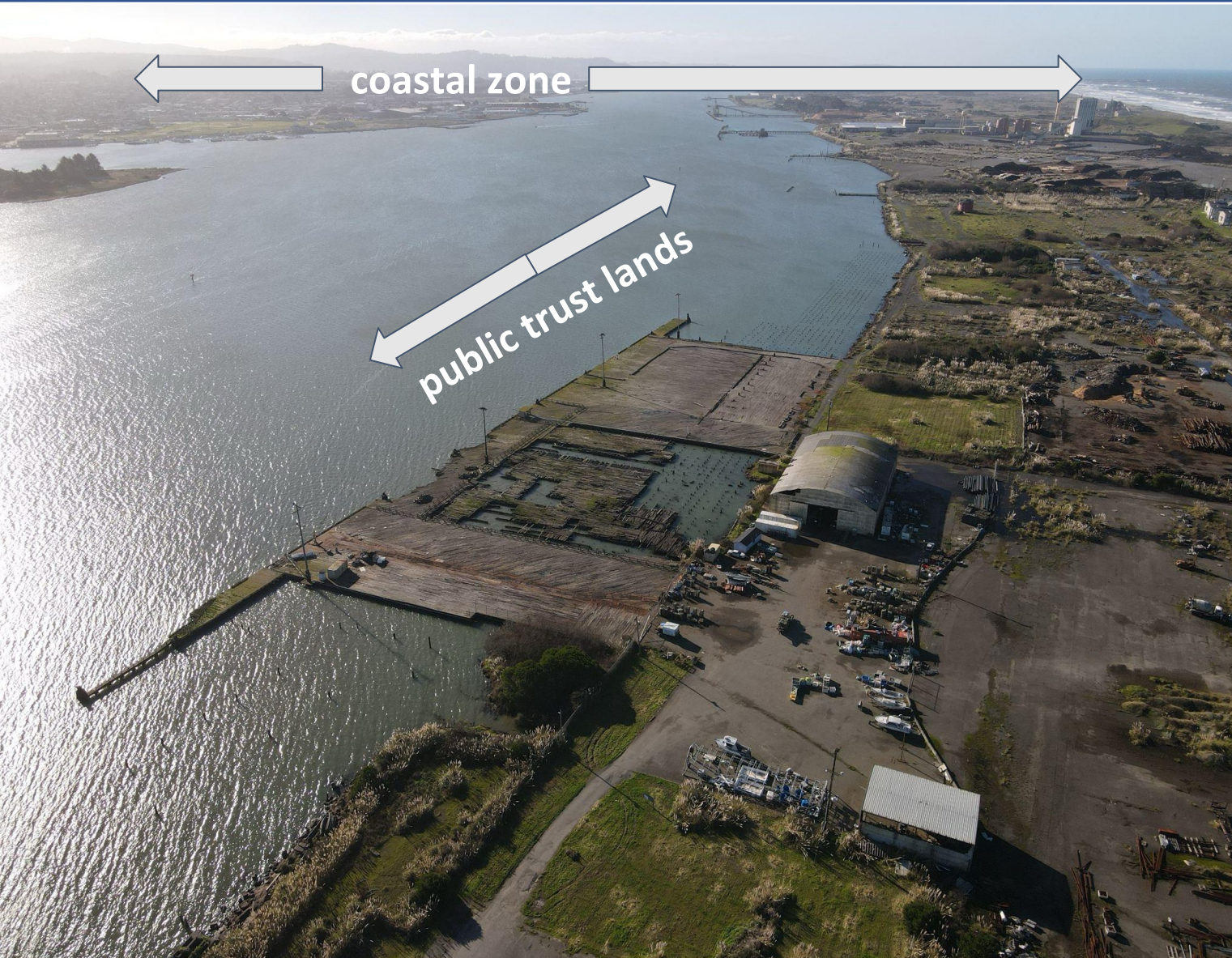
- The **California Coastal Act** and **federal Coastal Zone Management Act** govern development in California's coastal zone and protect coastal resources
- Staging and integration projects **will require a coastal development permit (CDP)** under the **California Coastal Act**
- Separate review under the **federal Coastal Zone Management Act** will likely be limited

Staging and integration projects will generally be located

- Within the coastal zone, and
- At least partly on public trust tidelands and submerged lands

Meaning, these projects will require both Coastal Act review and public trust lands review

Overlapping jurisdiction



Humboldt Bay Harbor
District proposed
project site

Public trust lands

**Local agencies (“grantees”)
granted lands by the California
Legislature**

→ *issue leases/authorizations for
activities on public trust lands*

Public trust lands	Coastal zone
<p>Local agencies (“grantees”) granted lands by the California Legislature</p> <p>→ <i>issue leases/authorizations for activities on public trust lands</i></p>	<p>Local agencies with certified local coastal programs or certified port master plans</p> <p>→ <i>issue coastal development permits</i></p>

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Public trust lands review agency roles



- Public trust lands within the Ports of Long Beach, Los Angeles, and Humboldt have been granted to local agencies

Likely agency roles for public trust lands

Port of Long Beach	Humboldt Bay Harbor District	State Lands Commission
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Issues local grantee authorization (Harbor Development Permit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Issues local grantee authorization (development permit pursuant to Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation, and Conservation District Act)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Unlikely to issue authorizations for projects on granted lands*● Retains oversight authority over granted lands <p>*SLC retains authority to require a lease for certain types of dredging activities</p>

Coastal Act review agency roles



Public trust lands	Coastal zone
<p>Local agencies (“grantees”) granted lands by the California Legislature</p> <p>→ <i>issue leases/authorizations for activities on public trust lands</i></p>	<p>Local agencies with certified local coastal programs or certified port master plans</p> <p>→ <i>issue coastal development permits</i></p>
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When the Coastal Commission and a local agency both have jurisdiction, either:

- The Coastal Commission and the local agency both process separate coastal development permits, or
- Only the Coastal Commission issues a consolidated coastal development permit, if the local government, applicant, and Commission agree

Under **Senate Bill 286**, the Coastal Commission is required to process a consolidated coastal development permit for *“any new development that requires a coastal development permit and that is associated with, appurtenant to, or necessary for the construction and operation of offshore wind energy projects...”*

- Generally applies to staging and integration projects

Under **Senate Bill 286**, the Coastal Commission is required to process a consolidated coastal development permit for “***any new development that requires a coastal development permit and that is associated with, appurtenant to, or necessary for the construction and operation of offshore wind energy projects***”

- Broad applicability

Senate Bill 286 also states that another provision of the Coastal Act applies, which only allows consolidated permits **when a local government with a certified local coastal program and the Coastal Commission both have jurisdiction** over a project

Who issues the coastal development permit?

- When a port with a certified port master plan has jurisdiction over the project?
- When only a local government has jurisdiction over the project?
- Other scenarios?

Who issues the permit dictates the standard of review and permit procedures

Who is likely to issue the coastal development permit?

Coastal Commission	Ports	Local government
<p>Must process consolidated CDP for projects in the CDP permitting jurisdiction of both the Commission and a local government with a certified local coastal program</p> <p>→ Humboldt Bay Harbor District project</p>	<p>Likely process CDP for projects governed by a certified port master plan</p> <p>→ Port of Long Beach project</p>	<p>Unlikely to issue CDPs. Certified local coastal program may be used as guidance for Coastal Commission issued CDPs.</p>

- Ports may need to amend their port master plans before they can issue any CDP for a staging and integration project
- Local governments may amend their local coastal programs, particularly if it will be used as guidance for a CDP issued by the Coastal Commission



Key report findings: Tribal consultation and engagement

- Many ports in California are located in areas of historical, cultural, economic, and environmental significance to Tribal Nations
- Staging and integration projects may impact Tribal cultural resources and interests

- Agencies generally must consult with Tribal Nations during environmental review and in certain circumstances during the permitting process
- Opportunities for shared decision making, like—
 - Co-management agreements
 - Co-governance agreements
 - Designating Tribal Nations as agencies formally involved in environmental review

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

- Lead agencies **must offer consultation opportunities** to federally recognized and non-federally recognized Tribal Nations that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the proposed project area (Assembly Bill 52, 2014)

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

- **Currently unclear** whether lead agencies are required to provide federally recognized Tribal Nations likely to be affected by a proposed project with an opportunity for consultation
- However, NEPA specifically allows federal agencies to designate a Tribal Nation as a **joint lead agency or cooperating agency**
- Many federal agencies have **Tribal consultation policies** that require them to consult with Tribal Nations that may be impacted by an agency's action on a project

Under the California Coastal Commission's Tribal Consultation Policy

- Coastal Commission must consult with Tribal Nations when a Commission decision on a coastal development permit, port master plan, or local coastal program would negatively impact Tribal interests

Under Assembly Bill 1284, Tribal Co-Governance and Co-Management of Ancestral Lands and Waters Act

- Certain natural resource state agencies **have authority to enter into co-governance and co-management agreements** with federally recognized Tribal Nations to share responsibility, decision making, and partnership in resource management and conservation within a Tribal Nation's ancestral lands and waters
- Applies to the California Coastal Commission and California State Lands Commission



Key report findings: Public engagement

- Staging and integration projects are likely to impact communities near ports that face health, environmental, economic, and accessibility burdens
- Federal, state, and local agencies developing environmental review documents and considering permits for staging and integration projects are typically subject to public notice and engagement requirements under various laws

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), a lead agency must:

- Make an environmental impact statement (EIS) available to the public
- Ensure any notice of intent to prepare an EIS includes a request for public comment on alternatives or impacts and on relevant information, studies, or analyses

Federal regulations previously required public notice throughout the environmental review process and consideration of public comments, but these regulations were recently rescinded

The **Coastal Commission** is generally required to hold a public hearing and provide notice to the public and interested parties when deciding on:

- Coastal development permits, and
- Amendments to port master plans or local coastal programs

The Coastal Act and Coastal Commission regulations also generally require ports with certified port master plans and local governments with certified local coastal programs to provide the public with notice of permitting and planning decisions and an opportunity to participate

Ports and harbor districts may have public noticing and review requirements that apply to the processing of permits for development within their jurisdiction

- **Port of Long Beach:**

- Hearings on Harbor Development Permit and amendment to Port Master Plan
- Zero Emissions, Energy Resilient Operations (ZEERO) Round Table and Collaboration

- **Humboldt Bay Harbor District:**

- Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation, and Conservation District Act public noticing requirements
- Adopted resolutions and Community Engagement Commitments and Strategies Plan



Conclusion and next steps

1. The permitting process for staging and integration projects is complex, involves numerous agencies and statutes, and is likely to take several years.
2. A recent state opt-in certification program can potentially help to consolidate permitting requirements and expedite timelines for staging and integration projects. However, its applicability is not certain and project proponents have not opted in.
3. Recent legislation to consolidate Coastal Act permitting is somewhat ambiguous, but likely applies to certain staging and integration projects (like the Humboldt Bay Harbor District project).

4. Federal, state, and local agencies leading environmental review or considering permits for staging and integration projects are bound by statutory, regulatory, and agency-policy requirements for public notice, public engagement, and Tribal consultation.
5. The rescission of federal NEPA regulations creates ambiguity around NEPA-based Tribal consultation and public notice requirements, but statutory public notice obligations and the ability to designate federally recognized Tribes as joint-lead or cooperating agencies remain intact.
6. There are opportunities for engagement with Tribal Nations and communities beyond those specifically required by statutes and regulations.

Panel discussion with California Coastal Commission & California State Lands Commission staff



- Moderator: **Awbrey Yost**, Senior Policy Analyst, Schatz Energy Research Center
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Q&A



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- To learn more about our OSW research, visit schatzcenter.org/wind
- To connect with the Pacific Offshore Wind Consortium, visit powc.us

California State Lands Commission

<https://www.slc.ca.gov/renewable-energy/offshore-wind-energy-development>

- Amy Vierra, Renewable Energy Specialist, Amy.Vierra@slc.ca.gov

California Coastal Commission

<https://www.coastal.ca.gov/upcoming-projects/offshore-wind>

- North Coast (Wigi/Humboldt Bay area): Catherine Mitchell, North Coast Harbor Analyst, catherine.mitchell@coastal.ca.gov
- South Coast (Long Beach area): Seth Villanueva, South Coast Port Planner, Seth.Villanueva@coastal.ca.gov