

Oregon's Offshore Wind Roadmap Needs Balance, Not Bias

Oregonians deserve transparent, balanced planning when it comes to offshore wind energy. Unfortunately, recent assessment materials prepared by the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) for the state's Offshore Wind Energy Roadmap fall short of that standard.

House Bill 4080 directed DLCD to *assess* existing policies and government capacity—not to presume that offshore wind development is inevitable, nor to design pathways that favor it. Yet the assessment repeatedly treats offshore wind as a foregone conclusion. Local land-use protections, infrastructure limits, natural hazards, and even voter direction are framed as “barriers” to be managed or overridden, rather than as legitimate safeguards reflecting community choice.

In Curry County, voters spoke clearly in 2024—nearly 80 percent advised county officials to oppose offshore wind projects. While DLCD acknowledges that vote, it dismisses it as irrelevant to state decision-making. That approach risks hollowing out local democracy while concentrating all authority at the state level.

The assessment also minimizes real community risks. Industrial infrastructure is discussed in town centers, floodplains, drinking water watersheds, and high-seismic zones as technical challenges, rather than as serious reasons to pause or exclude unsuitable locations altogether.

Oregon can pursue energy planning without sidelining rural and coastal communities. A credible roadmap must separate neutral assessment from policy advocacy, respect local land-use authority, and recognize that not every county is an appropriate host for offshore wind infrastructure.

Balanced planning builds trust. Presumptive planning erodes it.

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