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From Ken Bates

CFRA Co-Executive Director



As I write this, we are approaching 6 months to go before we reach the deadline for the 7c Working Group to complete its work.

For over 18 months, fishermen, tribal representatives, offshore wind (OSW) developers, and state and federal agency staff have participated in numerous meetings, subgroups, internal discussions, and extensive written comment periods—all centered around the 7C process. This process aims to create a statewide strategy for fostering cooperation between two disparate industries, while promoting the “avoidance, minimization, and mitigation” of negative impacts on commercial fishing and its long-term viability amid ocean industrialization.

So far, however, the early results of the 7C process appear to be trending toward disempowering the fishing industry. This is not unique to California. Fishing fleets in Scotland, England, Norway, Germany, and along the U.S. East Coast have all failed to achieve negotiational parity with international OSW developers and national governments.

At the May 1, 2025 RODA “Synthesis of the Science” workshop on offshore wind development, Captain Raymond Hall—a Scottish fisherman and industry representative—remarked that “two years were totally wasted” as Scottish fishermen attempted to negotiate compensation for lost fishing grounds. He added, “Scotland leases the seabed [to developers] as a business.”

Additionally, Captain Gerry O’Neill, a New Bedford, Massachusetts trawl fisherman related his experience in OSW meetings succinctly, “Fishermen have no weight.”

The 7C Fishermens Working group is expected to produce a Statewide Strategy for OSW/fishing fleet interactions on California's fishing grounds and harbors. Whether this process will provide any positive results and protection for California's commercial fishing communities is yet to be determined. A person with a pessimistic mindset might do well to quote Jeremiah O'Brien, of the Morro Bay Commercial Fishermen's Organization, "I have never been at a meeting where fishermen didn't lose something." Consider this the thought for the day.

In the meantime, the ten CFRA affiliates on the 7C Working Group will continue to forge ahead on our industry's behalf.

This Month's Pretty Photo



Do you know this California anchorage? (Last issue's pretty photo was of San Simeon Cove, near Morro Bay.)

Noteworthy articles

In Delaware, they've chosen resiliency funding:

<https://www.capegazette.com/article/us-wind-proposes-20-million-funds-commercial-fishermen/291135>

Offshore wind continues to retrench. As we discussed at length in the last issue, it remains unclear whether this is the end of OSW development off the West Coast, or a 4 year bump in the road with planning and permitting activities continuing. Here are three good articles on recent happenings:

<https://renews.biz/100227/rwe-ending-us-offshore-operations/>

<https://freebeacon.com/energy/trump-admin-halts-new-york-offshore-wind-project-orders-review-of-all-existing-biden-era-wind-permits/>

<https://www.governing.com/magazine/hopes-for-offshore-wind-are-blowing-away>

The CFRA co-sponsored academic research on fisheries and social cohesion. These were produced as input for the 7c Working Group. It is predictably nerdy but also important for coastal communities. Dive in via our website here:

https://www.californiafishermensresiliencyassociation.com/_files/ugd/1298ad_b4b21f7237184cc384037c0787f69023.pdf

and here:

https://www.californiafishermensresiliencyassociation.com/_files/ugd/1298ad_e13f57de192749ffb2a71d6373fedc90.pdf

Last, but not least, CFRA staff and colleagues have written a white paper in advance of the environmental impact report for the proposed Heavy Lift Terminal in Humboldt Bay, previewing what are questions and comments will be. That paper is here:

https://www.californiafishermensresiliencyassociation.com/_files/ugd/1298ad_5bd15c3ba7194fc18b2e173b907fb750.pdf

Meet Santa Barbara's Ava Schulenberg



Ava Schulenberg wears multiple hats in the commercial fishing world, not the least of which is "deckhand." Ava's father was a commercial fisherman and Ava was attached to the community at a young age. Between her time fishing as a kid with her dad, and the various crew roles she has had as an adult, Ava has fished for lobster, rock crab, halibut and rockfish.

She also serves as Assistant Director of the Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara and as Executive Director of the CFRA's newest member port association, the California Lobster & Trap Fishermen's Association.

After earning her degree at Tulane, Ava returned to Santa Barbara. At some point, she emailed friend of the CFRA Dr. Kim Selkoe to inquire how to get back into the commercial fishing world. The timing proved fortuitous. At that time, the Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara needed to staff up to execute a grant-funded fleet needs assessment. That gig lead to others, and eventually to a permanent position.

"She is incredibly kind and considerate, just a phenomenal people person," says Chris Voss, President of the Santa Barbara association. Chris adds that Ava is also strong with social media. Those twin traits, he says, have raised the positive profile of the organization.

When the association experienced some financial issues, Ava found additional work with the lobster association, where her engagement brought renewed vitality.

There is no such thing as a predictable day in Ava's

professional life. She might be speaking to a community group, working on a kelp restoration project, solving problems at the Saturday Fishermen's Market of Santa Barbara, staffing a career fair, or performing association work in Sacramento. And that's when it's not lobster season, when a 4 a.m. call might happily upend her plans, resulting in a day on the water.

Most Recent Board Report

All CFRA board reports are published to the CFRA website. Here is the most recent one, for the first quarter of 2025.

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