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Two Plans

Ken Bates, CFRA Co-Executive Director



Fishermen are not opposed to clean renewable energy. That being said, I have yet to encounter any fishing industry participants in favor of converting American's limited but very productive fishing grounds (which supply a sustainable food source to humans) to areas saturated with massive machines extracting wind energy to power land-based AI data centers and crypto currency facilities.

Today, we envision that there are two plans: Plan A and Plan B.

Plan A is to stop these offshore wind energy projects by pointing out the folly of extracting energy from the one thing responsible for powering the world's biological engine - ocean wind. Plan A also includes educating our communities about the experimental nature of floating deep water OSW development that is financially based on US tax payers support of subsidies and back-end increases in electricity rates, all provided to international OSW developers. There are multiple organizations working on Plan A, including the Responsible Offshore Development Alliance (RODA / <https://rodafisheries.org/>) and the REACT Alliance (<https://www.reactalliance.org/>). I invite you to check in to see the work they're doing.

Plan B is for the California fishing industry and West coast fishing communities to do what we can to greatly reduce the negative impacts of: fishing grounds loss, environmental damage to our ocean, and harbor and shoreside OSW impacts. This might be achieved by working within the state and federal permitting process and California's statewide strategy. Working on Plan B is where we at the CFRA spend most of our time.

Neither Plan A nor Plan B is a sure thing. The current federal administration seems as inconsistent as wind in the doldrums latitudes. Take a look at the Empire Wind Project. The Trump administration issued a stop-work order in April 2025, citing insufficient environmental review and consultation. Following a deal involving the approval of a natural gas pipeline in New York, construction was resumed.

President Trump's stopping the New York offshore Empire wind project only to allow it to resume after trading the project for a petrochemical pipeline is not policy. Closer to home, California fishermen continue to observe the lack of caution in evaluating potential environmental damage and harm to our shared seafood resources by state administration and agencies dedicated to the conversion of fishing grounds to offshore wind development. Fishermen's repeated requests that the five California leases be treated as experimental pilot projects with no new leases until these projects fail or succeed, seems to be ignored. The concept of using less energy instead of more and more is nowhere to be seen.

There is no plan C. To quote Peter Halmay, whose profile is featured below, "you can't stop trying to make better agreements, because the alternatives are worse."

The alternatives are worse.

This Month's Pretty Photos



This month's pretty photos are classic postcards gathered by The Humboldt Project. Top left: Eureka Boat Basin by E. F. Clements. Top right: Arcata Wharf, by Edward Mitchell. Left: Fleet at Lazio's by H.S. Crocker.

Last edition's pretty photo was of Trinidad harbor.

Noteworthy articles

The federal Bureau of Energy Management (BOEM) has rescinded designated wind areas that have not been leased.

<https://www.boem.gov/newsroom/notes-stakeholders/boem-rescinds-designated-wind-energy-areas-outer-continental-shelf>

According to an AP-NORC poll in late June, citizens from various political viewpoints have soured on offshore wind:

<https://apnews.com/article/climate-ev-solar-wind-tax-fema-trump-5303f07c30f2cdbc9cf129f9928c8a32>

For those who love a deep dive, here is an article from the Nature Portfolio Journal Ocean Sustainability on human/wildlife conflict. CFRA board member Dick Ogg is a co-author.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s44183-025-00139-0.pdf>

It's a repeat from last time, but worthwhile: 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 San Diego's
Dean of Urchin
Fishing Pete
Halmay**

Pete Halmay runs the Tuna Harbor Dockside Market in San Diego, a successful community-supported boat-to-table operation. For decades, Pete dove commercially to harvest sea urchins.

He's a trained engineer, who traveled from McGill University to engineering posts in Los Angeles, to abalone diving, and ultimately to urchins. He says he learned two things in engineering: 1) $\text{force} = \text{mass} \times \text{acceleration}$ and, 2) you can't push on a rope.

While in L.A., he suffered through bosses who were "complete morons. But eventually I found that their big problem was me." He says he didn't have patience for "the daily crap to get along with people." He had begun diving by that time and, in 1970, Pete responded to an ad seeking abalone divers.

Pete's not a guy with a lot of hobbies. His work, the reading that goes with it, talking with fishermen, those things are his fun.

Asked about the current state of California urchin diving, Pete says that it's divided into two parts and always has been. NorCal was a boom and now it's a bust. SoCal developed slowly and is neither boom nor bust.

In response to initiatives to address Northern California's overpopulation of (super-skinny, not commercially viable) purple sea urchins, Pete says that it's his view that "you can't play god in the kelp beds." With 50 years of hindsight, Pete believes that balance in NorCal kelp beds will return. He cites a situation in Southern California in 1975, when "they were dumping quicklime by the tons to kill sea urchins, and killing millions didn't change anything." Most of the return to balance was oceanographic and, eventually, lush kelp beds returned. "What goes wrong is rarely simple, and simplistic solutions are typically ineffective... we're just tinkering around the edges."

When asked about the formula for success of the Dockside Market, Pete states that they are very fortunate to have 3 million potential customers within 30 miles. The market's genesis was that Pete's son and another fisherman were selling fish off the boat and wanted to sell on land. Pete went to the port, who said you need a Department of Health permit. The Health Department said, no you need a port permit first. This went on for

two years. At some point, a local journalist wrote an article about the Catch-22 situation. Staff to a county supervisor took note. The supervisor reached out to the port commission chairman with the notion of “let’s make this happen.” 11 years ago, 1500 people showed up on the market’s first day. To make the market fully legal, state legislation was required. The “Pacific to Plate” bill earned unanimous votes in California’s House and Senate. Since then, 500-600 people shop at the market week to week.

During the pandemic, Dockside Market wait times went up, social distancing was required—2 fathoms apart, lubbers—and sales doubled.

The Tuna Harbor Dockside Market (<https://www.thdocksidemarket.com/>) helped to publicize the social and economic roles of commercial fishermen. Now customers speak out on their behalf, the market has become a darling of the port, and fishing infrastructure improvements have come that were otherwise unlikely.

Pete has served on many fishery committees, including as a member of a working group for the implementation of the California Marine Life Protection Act, a process in some ways similar to the current offshore wind 7c Working Group. Though painful, he says, “you have to attend every goddamn meeting. It’s hard to be effective. Everything is marshalled against you...You can’t stop trying to make better agreements, because the alternatives are worse. Explain what commercial fishing is, what its attributes are, and why you should keep it.”

Pete frets about this question: how do you get fishermen to work together? “We stop ourselves if we don’t stay together on the important points, he says, because “we need commercial fishing in California 100 years from now.” Hopefully, in the end, you find people like those elected officials a decade ago in San Diego, ones who listen enough to get it and pitch in on behalf of the industry.

Most Recent Board Report

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

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