

ASSEMBLY BILL 525 (CHIU)

INVESTING IN OFFSHORE WIND POWER

SUMMARY

This bill jumpstarts the state's offshore wind energy industry and generates thousands of jobs by directing the state to prepare a strategic plan for the harnessing of offshore wind power, a resource that will supplement our supply of renewable energy.

BACKGROUND

California has set ambitious goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Achieving these goals requires building renewable, clean energy, which will create jobs as part of a clean economy. California has a unique opportunity to tap into an enormous renewable zero-emissions energy source: offshore wind.

The potential of offshore wind energy is massive: California has the technical potential for 112 gigawatts (GW) of offshore wind. For context, the state will need an estimated 150 GW of new renewables by 2050 to achieve its greenhouse gas goals.

THE PROBLEM

California has yet to make a significant investment in offshore wind power, despite the fact it is a critical component in not only creating more jobs in the green economy but also allowing the state to meet our climate change goals.

One of the biggest challenges for California's current renewable energy sector is supplying consumers with consistent clean power due to the intermittent production of solar. The peak of solar production is usually on sunny days, tapering off in the late afternoon and evening, just as people return home and are consuming more energy. Unlike solar energy, wind can reliably produce energy in the evening and throughout the night. Together solar and wind are a perfect duo for solving the problem of intermittent green energy generation.

Additionally, our state is in the midst of a historic time as the world battles the COVID-19 pandemic and its subsequent effect on the economy, which has left millions of people in the state out of work and applying for unemployment insurance. Advancing offshore wind will provide jobs in many areas that have already been

suffering from high unemployment and help invigorate the economy by getting people to work.

Six other coastal states (New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Virginia) have already set targets committing to offshore wind power. This bold action is projected to deliver over 80,000 new jobs and infuse the economy with \$25 billion dollars in annual economic output by 2030. Additionally, these offshore wind projects will have produced an estimated 25 gigawatts of green wind energy by 2035.

Offshore wind development in California has the potential to create an equally significant number of new labor-fueled jobs. Offshore wind development will tap into the existing skilled workforce of the oil and gas industries that have experience developing ocean energy infrastructure. Offshore wind development would also create an opportunity to train a new generation of workers to perform highly skilled jobs in manufacturing, construction, maintenance, and operations. According to the Workforce Development Institute, an estimated 74 different occupations are needed for the planning, development, and operation of a single offshore wind farm.

THE SOLUTION

AB X would further the state's goal of 100% clean energy by 2045 by planning for the development of utility-scale offshore wind energy in the state.

Specifically, this bill requires the California Energy Commission to develop a strategic plan for California to achieve at least 10 GW of renewable wind energy by 2040. This plan will recommend near-term actions the state should take to help California realize the full environmental and economic benefits of offshore wind.

The bill will also require the state and local governments to work together to study and establish workforce standards and equitable economic development benefits for the communities in which these wind energy facilities will be located. These practices, like local and targeted hiring practices, will help ensure that everyone in the community can share the economic benefits of wind.

Offshore wind is an energy resource with the potential to transform the state in ways that will have extraordinary environmental and economic benefits.

SUPPORT

Environment California (co-sponsor)
State Building & Construction Trades Council of
California (co-sponsor)
American Clean Power Association
Brightline
California League of Conservation Voters
IBEW Local 6
International Union of Operating Engineers
Offshore Wind California

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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