



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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Budget Request for Project FORWARD: Facilitating Offshore Renewable Wind and Regional Development

Project Justification

Humboldt County occupies a unique position for California's offshore wind (OSW) industry development, with leases already granted off its coast and Humboldt Bay being one of few West Coast locations capable of supporting wind turbine manufacturing, assembly, and deployment. The county needs dedicated funding to comprehensively manage the multi-disciplinary aspects of these projects, including community benefits negotiations, environmental processes, workforce development, and meaningful engagement with stakeholders and Tribal nations.

Project Description

This budget request seeks \$3.8 million in one-time funding to build essential capacity over 3 years through staff, technical and legal support for local OSW initiatives. This will enable critical activities across energy generation, port development, transmission planning, workforce development, and establishing infrastructure for effective engagement in various OSW development processes.

Community Benefit Agreements

Significant community concerns exist regarding potential benefit strategies (Community Benefit Agreements, impact fees, etc.) as Humboldt County's diverse population has varying priorities. The county is well-positioned to facilitate consensus-building and negotiate agreements with developers who have already expressed interest in working with the county. This budget will provide staff, legal and technical expertise needed for effective negotiation and implementation planning.

Transmission Development

Community support is essential for onshore transmission development, which has faced opposition in East Coast communities. Humboldt currently has inadequate infrastructure to transmit and distribute power to large segments of its own community. This budget request will provide dedicated staff to engage in local and state regulatory processes with local and technical expertise that can aid progress.

Local Zoning, Environmental and Permitting

The County is currently updating its Local Coastal Plan and zoning to facilitate harbor development for the heavy lift terminal and potentially other supporting facilities. Additional environmental work and permitting will be required by multiple agencies. This budget will fund significant staff effort and potential consultant assistance to better inform the County's approach to community concerns.

Local Workforce and Supply Chain

Using a prior state grant, the County's Economic Development Division is finalizing an Economic Development Roadmap identifying workforce and supply chain operations needed for OSW development. This budget will fund staff to coordinate training, develop local-first hiring programs, and prepare local businesses to engage in procurement processes with industry operators. It will also strengthen efforts to attract foreign direct investment through initiatives like the annual POWERCA Conference.

Tribal and Local Government

The County needs to maintain close communication with local governments and Tribal Nations, including formal consultation for efforts like General Plan Updates. State support would ensure partnership with local entities and regional Tribes, including providing them capacity funding to engage with the County's activities.





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Draft Strategic Actions and Goals

Humboldt County: Project FORWARD

Community Benefit Agreements & Education

- Lead development of ballot measure to reform Headwaters Fund for future CBA agreements
- Create community benefit agreement negotiation processes with transparency guidelines
- Host regular community workshops to gather stakeholder input and address misinformation
- Develop community benefit ordinance and standardized CBA agreement templates with legal counsel
- Create a central online hub for offshore wind information as a trusted information source

Transmission Development & Energy Resilience

- Engage with CAISO-selected transmission developers
- Participate in milestones of CAISO's Transmission Planning Process
- Submit formal comments on CEC's Integrated Energy Policy Report workshops
- Coordinate with PG&E on distribution system upgrades for underserved areas
- Develop local energy resilience requirements for inclusion in developer agreements

Local Zoning, Environmental and Permitting

- Complete Local Coastal Plan and zoning updates aligned with Humboldt Bay Area Plan amendments
- Prepare for and participate in Harbor District wind terminal CEQA/NEPA activities
- Support Harbor District's federal and state grant processes (\$18.25M CEC grant implementation, Prop 4)
- Monitor and engage in offshore wind permitting streamlining legislation
- Participate in Humboldt Bay Master Plan development

Workforce Development

- Partner with College of the Redwoods/Cal Poly Humboldt on targeted OSW training programs
- Facilitate local-first hiring agreements for terminal operations, construction related to OSW projects
- Implement "Skills Passport" certification program aligned with Global Wind Organization standards
- Support expansion of apprenticeship programs in the region
- Establish an Offshore Wind Task Force with industry, labor, education, and community stakeholders

Supply Chain Development & Business Attraction

- Support WindLINK in creating a local business directory of companies with offshore wind capabilities
- Assist WindLINK with hosting regular "OSW Business Opportunity" workshops for local businesses, and coordinating with developers on supplier engagement events
- Collaborate with WindLINK on providing technical assistance to local businesses, including partnering with APEX Accelerator on procurement opportunities related to offshore wind
- Conduct infrastructure needs assessment to service the OSW industry in Humboldt Bay, partner with local jurisdictions on exploring/pursuing a Green Empowerment Zone or other designation to attract capital
- Continue hosting POWER CA to promote local renewable industry, and participating in business attraction recruitment activities, including travelling/coordinating with SelectUSA to attract foreign investment

Stakeholder Coordination

- Provide funding for fishing and aquaculture industries, Tribal nations, and local governments, including county departments, to participate in county-led planning processes
- Facilitate regular coordination meetings with the above stakeholders
- Coordinate formal consultation processes for General Plan updates and other significant planning decisions, if necessary

Project FORWARD - Budget Breakdown						
\$		3,816,250	over 3 years			
BUDGET BY CATEGORY AND SUBCATEGORY						
CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	3-Year Total	% of Total Budget
STAFFING		\$450,000	\$450,000	\$450,000	\$1,350,000	35%
	Offshore Wind Program Coordinator (New Staff)	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$450,000	
	Transmission Coordinator (Existing Planning Staff)	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$225,000	
	Planning/Zoning Coordination Staff (Existing Staff)	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$225,000	
	Community Engagement Coordinator (Existing Staff)	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$225,000	
	Economic Development - Supply Chain/WindLink	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$225,000	
CONSULTANTS		\$375,000	\$275,000	\$125,000	\$775,000	20%
	Legal Counsel (CBA, ordinances, permits, Green Empowerment Zone)	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$225,000	
	Harbor District EIR Technical Review	\$200,000	\$100,000	\$0	\$300,000	
	Transmission Technical Consultants	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$150,000	
	Workforce Analysis Consultants	\$50,000			\$50,000	
	Bay-Wide Ec Dev Consultants		\$50,000		\$50,000	
WINDLINK PARTNERS		\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$600,000	16%
	WindLink Partner Engagement	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$600,000	
	<i>Partners: Humboldt County Economic Development, Blue Lake Rancheria, RREDC, Redwood Coast Chamber Foundation, Greater Eureka Chamber, North Coast SBDC, NorCal APEX Accelerator</i>					
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT		\$85,000	\$85,000	\$85,000	\$255,000	7%
	Stipends for public agency, tribal, industry staff	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$150,000	
	Web site creation and maintenance	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$30,000	
	Public Engagement Events	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$30,000	
	Translation/Accessibility Services	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$15,000	
	Community Surveys/Outreach	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$15,000	
	Task Force Operations	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$15,000	
EVENTS		\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$450,000	12%
	POWER CA Annual Conference	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$450,000	
OPERATIONS		\$45,000	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$135,000	
	Office Supplies & Equipment	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$45,000	
	Travel & Training	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$90,000	
INDIRECT COSTS	15% of staff, consultant, events costs	\$146,250	\$131,250	\$108,750	\$386,250	10%