

Environmental Studies Program: Ongoing Study

Field	Study Information
Title	
Administered by	Pacific OCS Region
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Procurement Type(s)	Contract
Conducting Organization(s)	Hamer Environmental
Total BOEM Cost	\$474,655
Performance Period	FY 2024–2027
Final Report Due	March 1, 2027
Date Revised	April 14, 2025
Problem	Limited baseline information exists concerning port infrastructure that supports existing users, especially commercial fishing, even though such infrastructure may be dramatically affected by changes associated with offshore wind development or oil and gas platform decommissioning activities.
Intervention	This study will summarize the potential port infrastructure requirements and upgrades necessary for offshore energy activities, how those upgrades may conflict with or benefit other port users and working waterfronts and identify any port-related industry synergies that may increase mutual benefit.
Comparison	Using information from previous port studies and guided discussion among stakeholders, this study will investigate in greater detail the interactions between offshore energy related port upgrades and other port-based industries.
Outcome	Potential port-use and space-use conflicts and synergies information will be documented to inform BOEM's review of construction and operation plans and to evaluate suitable mitigation measures, leasing processes, BOEM and other agencies' environmental reviews, potential mitigations, and inter-industry negotiations.
Context	All West Coast ports in the Pacific OCS Region.

BOEM Information Need(s): BOEM and other decisionmakers need to understand how offshore renewable energy development may affect other port-based industries, especially commercial fishing. Such information will be critical to evaluate offshore wind construction and operation plans, oil & gas decommissioning environmental impact statements and/or assessments and mitigation measures to address potential impacts and to support inter-industry negotiations, including those needed to obtain Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) consistency determinations.

The entire coast needs to be assessed due to the connectivity of fisheries among ports, especially for those that pursue migratory species (e.g., Highly Migratory Species [tunas, swordfish], Coastal Pelagic Species [market squid, anchovies, sardines], Pacific Salmon). In addition to being a general Pacific Region need, this coast-wide understanding is being requested by Washington State Treaty Tribes which are co-managers of fishery resources that enter their usual and accustomed areas.

Background: Previous and currently ongoing studies have documented the need for infrastructure upgrades at West Coast ports in order to support possible fabrication, assembly, staging, operations and maintenance, and decommissioning of offshore energy infrastructure. The possible interactions between the offshore energy and other port-based industries (e.g., commercial and recreational fishing, aquaculture, eelgrass mitigation areas) regarding port upgrades have not yet been investigated on the West Coast. There may be potential for space-use conflicts (e.g., competition for berths) and for synergies (e.g., deeper dredging improving safety and navigability for all vessels). Understanding these potential conflicts and synergies will help inform BOEM and other agencies' offshore energy planning and environmental reviews, the local harbor permitting decisions, and enhance inter-industry negotiations, mitigations, and mutual benefits.

Objectives: This study will document existing port industries infrastructure needs, infrastructure needs for desired working water fronts, and potential space-use conflicts and space-use synergies among port-based industries (especially commercial fishing) from port infrastructure upgrades necessary for offshore energy development.

Methods: Researchers will use documented offshore energy industry port infrastructure needs from previous studies to inform the inter-industry interaction investigation. Researchers will analyze available data relevant to port industries and use ethnographic tools to collect new information on other industries' port infrastructure needs and anticipated interactions with offshore wind and oil & gas industry infrastructure (Culver et al. 2007; Pomeroy et al. 2011). The methods used by California Sea Grant researchers in their investigation of "Commercial Fisheries of the Santa Barbara Channel and Associated Infrastructure Needs" are transferable and appropriate for this study (Culver et al. 2007; Pomeroy et al. 2011). These methods may include, but are not limited to:

- Use published information and site visits to acquire and summarize existing information on port infrastructure and services (e.g., analyze landings data, mapping facilities and access points, etc.).
- Collect new information about the importance of port infrastructure and services from commercial and recreational fishers and persons knowledgeable about West coast commercial fisheries using methods (e.g., guided discussions, workshops) appropriate to the source.
- Collect new information about the importance of port infrastructure and services from other port industries (e.g., aquaculture) using methods (e.g., guided discussions, workshops) appropriate to the source.

Specific Research Question(s): For port facilities that may be affected by offshore energy leases:

1. By industry, gear, and fishery, what existing port infrastructure or services are a) used, b) critically used, and c) desired? Are there seasonal patterns of use?
2. Given local space constraints, are there facilities or services that could be obtained or improved during future port upgrades that would benefit existing industries (including fisheries) and/or

enable new ones? Are there any facilities currently being subsidized that could benefit from additional use?

3. Are there specific port infrastructure or services critical to Tribal needs?
4. How could expected infrastructure changes affect (benefit/harm) stakeholders?

Current Status: The contract between the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and Hamer Environmental, hereinafter referred to as Hamer, was awarded on August 22, 2024. Following the kickoff meeting held in September, Task 1 of the study was successfully completed. Hamer is currently nearing the completion of Task 6a, which includes the port profile deliverables, as well as Task 3, which encompasses the interim report deliverable. The final interim report will offer a comprehensive understanding of both current and projected progress. Furthermore, Hamer has initiated the development of survey questions to support the objectives and research questions outlined in this study. BOEM is working closely with Hamer to collect the necessary information to ensure compliance with the Paper Reduction Act (PRA) requirements.

Publications Completed: N/A

Affiliated WWW Sites: N/A

References:

Culver CS, Richards JB, Pomeroy CM. 2007. Commercial fisheries of the Santa Barbara channel and associated infrastructure needs. California Sea Grant Publication No. T-062. 100 p.

https://repository.library.noaa.gov/view/noaa/42127/noaa_42127_DS1.pdf

Pomeroy C, Thomson CJ, Stevens MM. 2011. California's North Coast fishing communities historical perspective and recent trends. California Sea Grant Publication No. T-072. 340 p.

https://www.opc.ca.gov/webmaster/ftp/pdf/docs/CA_NCoastFCP.pdf