

Offshore wind energy looks more promising for Oregon

By ERIN ROSS
Oregon Public Broadcasting

PORTLAND — Oregon’s high desert is getting crowded, so wind power advocates are once again looking to the sea.

At a conference this week in Portland, ocean energy advocates presented an update on the state of offshore wind power in Oregon. Costs have dropped dramatically since the last failed attempt to harness the wind over Oregon’s Pacific waters, making an offshore, deep-water wind farm once again seem feasible.

A stretch of the Pacific Ocean off the coast between Humboldt County, California, and Coos Bay, has some of the highest wind power-generating potential in the country. The area north of the California border looks particularly promising to green energy advocates because the region already has a functioning electric grid. But a past attempt to install five floating turbines off Coos Bay faced rising costs and opposition from the fishing industry, and was eventually moved to California when no one could be found to buy the high-priced power the facility planned to generate.



Photo courtesy of Principle Power

Principle Power, a Seattle-based company, moved its planned offshore wind project to California.

But one big thing has changed since then, according to Jason Busch, executive director of the Pacific Ocean Energy Taskforce and a speaker at the conference: The number of offshore wind farms across the globe has skyrocketed, and the cost of wind power has dropped 75%.

“These cost curves are

really well documented,” said Busch, who expects prices to keep falling. By 2030, he expects costs to be comparable to those of coal power and natural gas. Even now, “government subsidies are no longer necessary,” Busch said.

Unlike the Atlantic Ocean, the Pacific rests on a continental shelf and the

water gets very deep, very fast. So unlike the wind farms of the Atlantic, which are fairly close to shore and are installed by drilling deep into the ocean floor, this farm would be floating. Researchers say that means it would be less likely to harm ocean ecosystems.

That doesn’t mean wind power is a consequenc-

es-free panacea, Bush pointed out.

“There will be some impacts to fishing grounds, some good, some bad, and some unknown,” he said. “But at the end of the day, the issue is: Some people can’t fish where they want to or have historically fished.”

Any offshore wind farm on this stretch of the Pacific will essentially act as a marine reserve, because commercial and recreational fishing will likely be limited in the area. That could mean that fishermen can’t access fishing grounds, but it could also increase fish abundance on the edge of the farm.

Researchers are still studying what impacts offshore wind farms have on animals like whales. And offshore wind energy operations will almost certainly have some impact on migratory shorebirds.

Unlike the wind farms on the East Coast, which are located near the shore and have turbines that are attached to the ocean floor, any wind farms off the coast of Oregon will be far out to sea, past Dungeness crabbing grounds. That means that they’ll have to be floating — with potentially fewer impacts on marine life on the ocean

floor. They’ll also be harder for people to see from shore.

A meeting of the U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, or BOEM, is planned for Sept. 27 in Portland. The meeting will include engineers, public officials from coastal counties and representatives of companies that may want to develop wind energy off the coast of Oregon.

Busch doesn’t expect any policy decisions to come out of the meeting. He said it’s more of a chance for different stakeholders to get up to speed on the state of the technology.

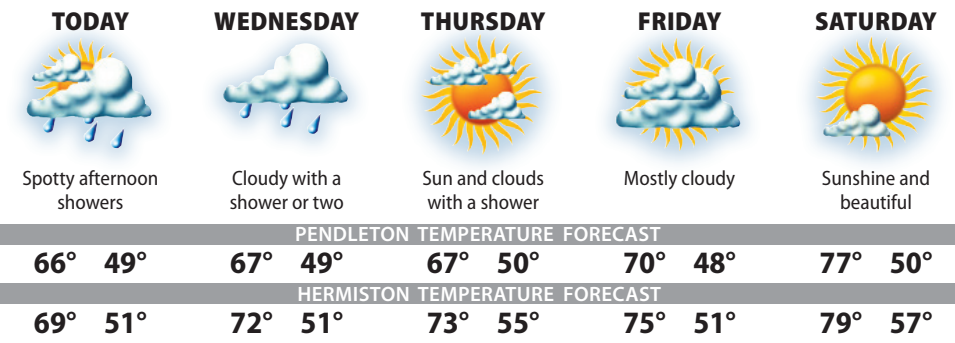
He expects there will be representatives from some major corporations in the room. “There’s a lot of interest,” Busch said.

It will be the first step — sort of a pre-step, Busch said — toward developing a large scale wind operation off the coast.

It’s a step Busch said the Northwest needs to take.

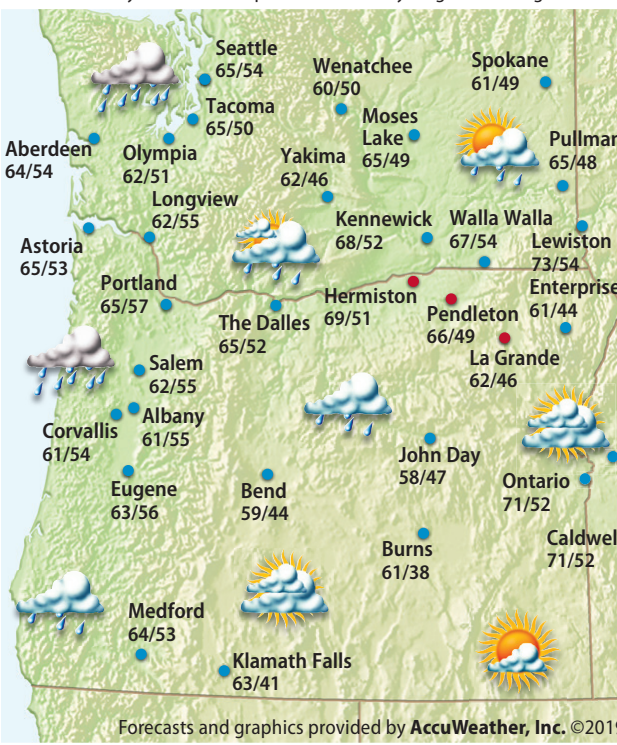
“Our options for energy are limited. There will be no new hydropower, no more coal, no more nuclear. Geothermal is struggling. Solar is great, onshore wind is great, but the best sites are limited,” Busch said. “Our options are offshore. We need to look at them very closely.”

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.

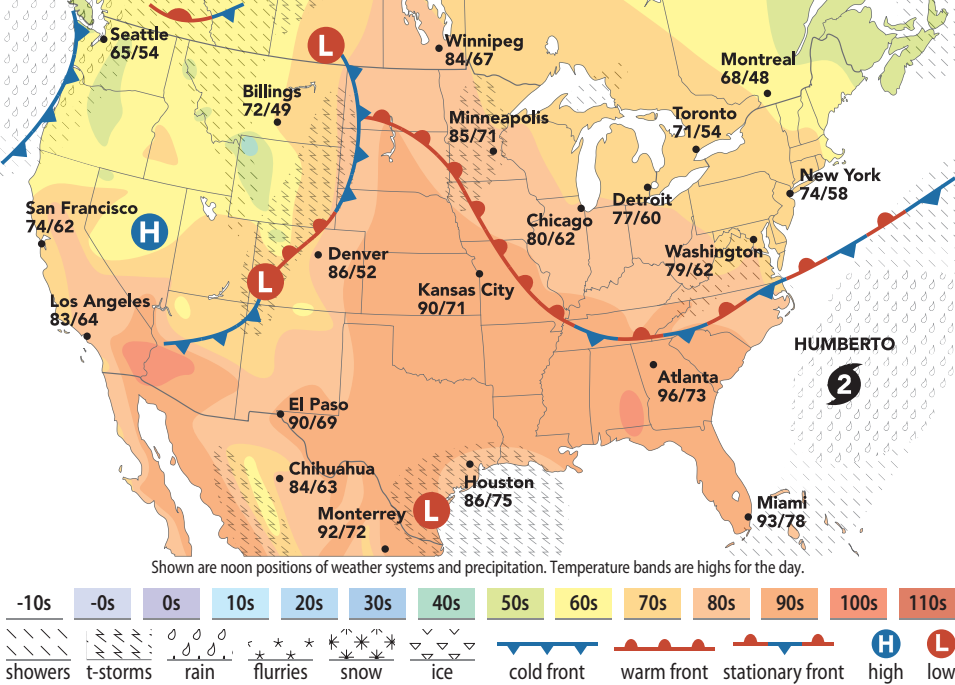
PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	58°	52°
Normals	78°	50°
Records	96° (1909)	31° (1897)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.32"	
Month to date	0.90"	
Normal month to date	0.24"	
Year to date	10.64"	
Last year to date	6.52"	
Normal year to date	8.62"	
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	65°	56°
Normals	79°	48°
Records	95° (1938)	28° (1936)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.06"	
Month to date	0.06"	
Normal month to date	0.20"	
Year to date	4.67"	
Last year to date	5.15"	
Normal year to date	6.32"	
WINDS (in mph)		
	Today	Wed.
Boardman	SSW 6-12	WSW 4-8
Pendleton	S 7-14	W 4-8
SUN AND MOON		
Sunrise today	6:35 a.m.	
Sunset tonight	7:03 p.m.	
Moonrise today	8:58 p.m.	
Moonset today	9:53 a.m.	

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)

High 106° in Needles, Calif. Low 27° in Truckee, Calif.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Supreme court to review sentence for murderer with intellectual disability

By REBECCA ELLIS
AND ROB MANNING
Oregon Public Broadcasting

PORTLAND — Micus Ward was convicted three years ago for murdering an elderly woman in her sleep in 2013. He was 22 in June 2016, when he was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Ward has an IQ of about 59, according to court filings.

The Oregon Supreme Court has agreed to look into Ward’s case, offering a high-stakes examination of the legal rights of violent suspects with intellectual disabilities.

The high court said it’s looking at two main issues: whether the U.S. Constitutional allows for someone with an intellectual disability to get a sentence of life without parole, and how an intellectual disability affects suspects’ rights at the time they’re arrested.

Ward’s intellectual disability was raised during his

2016 trial, but so were Ward’s alleged gang affiliations and his apparent lack of remorse after the murder.

According to an article in *The Oregonian* at the time, prosecutor Allison Brown downplayed Ward’s low intelligence in her statements to jurors.

“I’m not saying that he’s a mental giant,” she said. “But most of the population in prison are not mental giants.”

In an interview with OPB this week, Ward’s attorney for the appeal, Bear Wilner-Nugent, said his argument is in line with recent U.S. Supreme Court precedent.

“Just as juveniles can both not be executed and given life without parole so too people with intellectual disability should not be given life without parole,” Wilner-Nugent said.

Oregon lawmakers recently changed how the state treats violent offenders who are under 18, by ensuring young offenders aren’t

sentenced to life without parole.

Now, the Oregon Supreme Court will examine whether that limitation should also extend to offenders with a mental disability. The Supreme Court said they will look at “whether the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution prohibit a trial court from sentencing an intellectually disabled person convicted of aggravated murder to life in prison with the possibility of release or parole.”

The high court will also look at the rights of intellectually disabled suspects as they’re taken into police custody. The Supreme Court’s statement said it will review “whether the trial court erred by denying petitioner’s motion to suppress his statements to police, because petitioner, who is intellectually disabled, had not validly waived his Miranda rights.”

Oral arguments are scheduled for next March.

BRIEFLY

Search and Rescue helps victim of ATV crash

BAKER CITY — The Baker County Sheriff’s Office Search and Rescue team brought medics to the site of an ATV crash in the Elkhorn Mountains on Sunday afternoon.

Baker County Dispatch received a call at 1:46 p.m. that an ATV rider had hit a log and was thrown from the vehicle while riding on the Pine Creek Reservoir Road west of Haines, according to the Sheriff’s Office.

The rider’s name wasn’t available as of Monday morning.

Due to the difficult terrain, the Baker County Sheriff’s Office Search and Rescue Team was activated. SAR members transported medics to the incident location to treat the victim. The victim was then transported to a local hospital.

“We would like to express our gratitude to Baker County Search and Rescue, Baker Rural Fire Department, Baker City Fire

Department, and the private citizens that assisted,” a press release from the sheriff’s office said.

Officer-involved shooting in Oregon hotel room

HILLSBORO — One person was taken to a hospital after a police officer fired a gun inside an Oregon hotel room.

Hillsboro police say officers went to an Extended Stay America to investigate “suspicious circumstances” Saturday night. Police say an officer fired inside a room of the hotel after encountering people related to the investigation.

One person was taken to a hospital with minor injuries. No officers were injured.

An investigation is ongoing. Authorities tell KOIN-TV at least four rooms were impacted and some guests were evacuated during the altercation.

— *EO Media Group and Associated Press*

CORRECTIONS: The *East Oregonian* works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

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