

POLICY INTEGRATION OF GEOTHERMAL ENERGY

OFFSHORE CONSIDERATIONS

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Geothermal energy is a resource that is capable of providing continuous base load power. Right now, the USA is the world leader in geothermal capacity at 3386MW, with another 2500MW to be developed within the next decade. This presentation devotes itself to a brief overview of extant and proposed technologies, with an exploration of the legal and policy consideration applicable to offshore geothermal energy development on the US west coast. Optimal geothermal development offshore would preferentially select for hydrothermal vents and seamounts along tectonic plate fault lines; i.e. the Juan de Fuca Plate. What policy measures exist to mitigate the impacts of development in sensitive hydrothermal ecosystems containing understudied biota? Policy considerations of induced seismicity have to be addressed. Jurisdiction of offshore geothermal electricity within state waters is not clearly established. The framework regarding geothermal resource regulation is a pastiche of mineral, oil, and gas centered policy that may not be an optimal fit.