

January 29, 2018

Mr. John Laird, Secretary for Natural Resources
Chair, California Ocean Protection Council
California Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814
COPCpublic@resources.ca.gov

RE: **Support—Item 4:** Consideration and Approval of a Resolution Opposing New Exploration and Drilling for Oil and Gas on California's Outer Continental Shelf

Dear Secretary Laird and Councilmembers:

Oceana commends the California Ocean Protection Council (OPC) for bringing forward a resolution opposing expanded offshore oil and gas drilling off California's beautiful coast. We urge the OPC to adopt this resolution and provide a copy of it to the Secretary of the Interior as part of the 60-day public comment period established in the 2019-2024 Draft Proposed Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program (DPP). Additionally, as part of this action, Oceana supports the OPC sending a letter to the Secretary of the Interior expressing opposition to oil and gas exploration and leasing in the Pacific region—including attaching a copy of the adopted resolution—and requesting that California be removed from further consideration for new offshore drilling leases.

The Pacific coast boasts a diversity of marine life that rivals any other place on the globe. We are reliant on healthy, clean, and diverse oceans that support thousands of jobs and generate billions of dollars through fishing, tourism and recreation along California's coast. The risks associated with more offshore drilling will jeopardize coastal communities, ocean wildlife, and the local ocean economy.

As you are aware, accidents, leaks and spills can and *do* happen. We've seen the devastation offshore drilling has caused over the decades, including loss of human life, severe economic impacts to families and cities from the closure of fisheries, campgrounds and beaches, and significant harm to wildlife like sea lions, dolphins, and seabirds smothered by toxic oil. The 1969

Mr. John Laird, Secretary for Natural Resources
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Page 2 of 2

Santa Barbara oil spill and the 2015 Refugio Beach oil spill combined impacted more than 90 miles^{1,2,3} of pristine coastline and affected at least 935 square miles^{4,5} of ocean.

By adopting this resolution, the OPC will be an important voice in the growing movement across the state to protect waters off California from expanded offshore drilling. By opposing expanded offshore oil and gas activities, the OPC will join many other California decision makers including Governor Jerry Brown, Lt. Governor Gavin Newsom, Attorney General Xavier Becerra, the majority of California's Members of Congress, the California Fish and Game Commission, the California State Lands Commission, and the California Coastal Commission. Additionally, 24 California cities and counties have passed similar resolutions of opposition since April 2017.⁶

Oceana urges the Council to adopt the resolution and provide a copy of it with an attached comment letter to the Secretary of the Interior by the March 9, 2018 public comment period deadline. Thank you for your continued environmental leadership.

Sincerely,



Ashley Blacow
Pacific Policy and Communications Manager

¹ The University of California, Santa Barbara (1970) Santa Barbara Oil Pollution, 1969: A Study of the Biological Effects of the Oil Spill Which Occurred at Santa Barbara, California in 1969. U.S. Department of the Interior, Federal Water Pollution Control Administration. 53p.

² Refugio Response Joint Information Center (2015). Update 30: Unified Command continues to respond to the Refugio oil spill in Santa Barbara County, Calif. In: Refugio/South Bay Incident. Available: <https://calspillwatch.dfg.ca.gov/Spill-Archive/Santa-Barbara-County-Spill/lappg-2385/10> Accessed: August 7, 2017.

³ U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (no date) Torch/Platform Irene Oil Spill. In: California Coastal National Monument. Available: https://www.blm.gov/nlcs_web/sites/ca/st/en/prog/nlcs/California_Coastal_NM/spn/Torch_Platform_Irene_Oil_Spill Accessed: August 4, 2017.

⁴ California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Office of Oil Spill Prevention and Response. (2016) Refugio Oil Spill Response Evaluation Report: Summary and Recommendations from the Office of Spill Prevention and Response. 75p.

⁵ The University of California, Santa Barbara (1970) Santa Barbara Oil Pollution, 1969: A Study of the Biological Effects of the Oil Spill Which Occurred at Santa Barbara, California in 1969. U.S. Department of the Interior, Federal Water Pollution Control Administration. 53p.

⁶ Oceana. Opposition to New Offshore Drilling in the Pacific Ocean. Available: www.oceana.org/ProtectOurCoast Accessed: January 29, 2018.



Heal the Bay



January 29, 2018

John Laird, California Secretary for Natural Resources
California Ocean Protection Council
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311, Sacramento, CA 95814
Sent via email: COPCpublic@resources.ca.gov

RE: Support for Approval of a Resolution Opposing New Exploration and Drilling for Oil and Gas on California's Outer Continental Shelf (Agenda Item 4, January 31, 2018)

Dear Secretary Laird and Ocean Protection Council Members,

On behalf of Heal the Bay, Surfrider Foundation, California Coastkeeper Alliance, California Coastal Protection Network, Wildcoast, Center for Biological Diversity, and Natural Resources Defense Council, we provide the following comments supporting approval of a resolution opposing new exploration and drilling for oil and gas on California's Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). We appreciate the Ocean Protection Council's leadership to ensure healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems in California. The Council's adoption of this proposed resolution will affirm that our state is united in our opposition to new offshore exploration and drilling for oil and gas, and determined to protect our coastal economy and ocean recreational opportunities.

In adopting this resolution, the Ocean Protection Council will join a growing list of California state agencies that have expressed their opposition to opening California's OCS to new exploration and drilling, including the California Coastal Commission, the California Fish and Game Commission, and the California State Lands Commission. Additionally, current efforts are underway by local municipalities to adopt resolutions opposing new exploration and drilling on the OCS. At the time of writing, 25 cities and counties in California have passed such resolutions.¹

Our organizations find the proposed resolution to be strong and fairly comprehensive, although we do have several suggestions for additional clauses that will make the resolution stronger. Please consider adding the following:

¹ Opposition to New Offshore Drilling in the Pacific Ocean. Oceana. <http://usa.oceana.org/pacific-drilling>.

WHEREAS, The California Current is one of the most biodiverse marine ecosystems in the world and supports thriving fisheries, recreation, tourism, and livelihoods along the entire Pacific Coast; and^{2 3}

WHEREAS, There have been demonstrated harmful effects of routine offshore oil and gas operations, such as exploration activities that employ seismic air gun blasting, and drilling activities that involve the disposal of thousands of gallons of toxic “drilling muds” into the ocean; and⁴

WHEREAS, Climate science has demonstrated a direct link between fossil fuel emissions and increasing ocean acidification, which is contributing to the abrupt and irreversible degradation of global ocean health; and⁵

WHEREAS, the California Ocean Protection Council believes that new oil and gas development in the Pacific Outer Continental Shelf will threaten the environment, delay the nation’s movement toward a greater reliance on domestic renewable energy development, contribute to increased greenhouse gas emissions, and will adversely affect the health of human and marine life.⁶

Thank you again for your thoughtful consideration of these proposed additions. We greatly value the Council’s leadership in ensuring the health of our state’s marine ecosystem and ocean-based economy, and we look forward to continuing to work with the OPC. Please feel free to contact us with any questions you may have.

² Ocean Portal. Smithsonian Institute. <http://ocean.si.edu/census-marine-life>.


³ The National Significance of California’s Ocean Economy. NOAA Office for Coastal Management. <https://coast.noaa.gov/data/digitalcoast/pdf/california-ocean-economy.pdf>.

⁴ Hildebrand, J. A., “Impacts of Anthropogenic Sound” in J.E. Reynolds et al. (eds), Marine Mammal Research: Conservation beyond Crisis. 2005. <http://cetuc.ucsd.edu/Publications/Publications/HildebrandJHU2005.pdf>.

⁵ Brierley, A., M. Kingsford. Impacts of Climate Change on Marine Organisms and Ecosystems. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2009.05.046>.

⁶ Language modeled from State Lands Commission Offshore Lease Resolution, 12-06-16.

Sincerely,



Jocelyn Enevoldsen, Coastal Resources Coordinator
Heal the Bay



Jennifer Savage, California Policy Manager
Surfrider Foundation



Sara Aminzadeh, Executive Director
California Coastkeeper Alliance



Susan Jordan, Executive Director
California Coastal Protection Network



Zachary Plopper, Conservation Director
Wildcoast



Sandy Aylesworth, Oceans Advocate
Natural Resources Defense Council



Miyoko Sakashita, Oceans Director
Center for Biological Diversity