OCEANA Protecting the World's Oceans

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December 3, 2018

Ms. Jena Carter, Chair
Oregon Ocean Policy Advisory Council
Oregon DLCD
635 Capitol Street NE, Ste. 150
Salem, OR 9730

RE: Offshore Oil and Gas Drilling

Dear Ms. Carter and OPAC members:

On behalf of Oceana and our members, we are writing to encourage the Ocean Policy Advisory Council to support further actions to protect coastal communities and ocean resources from the risks of offshore oil and gas development. Oregon's ocean is a place of wonder and beauty, and it supports important tourism, fishing, and recreation opportunities that Oregonians want and need. The potentially irreversible effects of oil pollution on marine ecosystems and dependent economies do not warrant the questionable, short-term, economic benefits that might be gained from offshore oil and gas development off the Oregon coast.

Oceana greatly appreciates Governor Brown's leadership on this issue. Executive Order (EO) 18-28 directs state agencies to protect Oregon's coastal economy and diverse ecosystems by preventing activities associated with offshore oil and gas drilling. EO 18-28 acts as a critical safeguard for coastal communities and the environment. The EO establishes, as a matter of state policy, Oregon's opposition to the exploration and production of oil and gas off the Oregon coast as well as associated infrastructure.

Governor Brown's leadership in opposition to offshore oil and gas drilling, as well as that from other West Coast states and Members of Congress, comes in response to the largest potential number of offshore oil and gas lease sales in U.S. history. In January 2018, the Department of the Interior announced its plans to open nearly all U.S. federal waters to offshore drilling activities. The draft five-year program (2019-2024) for oil and gas development on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) would open the Pacific Ocean to offshore oil and gas drilling. The draft plan calls for lease sales off Oregon and Washington in January 2021.

The State of Oregon has long recognized the importance of our coast and the great value of protecting a healthy ocean ecosystem and managing for renewable resources over nonrenewable extraction. While EO 18-28 sets state policy, Oregon law prohibiting the exploration, development or production of oil and gas in the territorial sea is set to expire in 2020. Thus, we encourage OPAC to submit a letter supporting enduring legislative actions to protect our coast from oil and gas drilling, exploration, and spills.

We cannot overemphasize the risks of offshore oil and gas exploration and development. Offshore oil and gas activities—such as high-intensity seismic airgun surveys, drilling operations, and increased ship traffic—would threaten marine and coastal wildlife, including endangered and protected species like Southern Resident killer whales and Chinook salmon that migrate to and feed off our coast. Developing offshore oil and gas would require the construction of platforms, offshore and onshore pipelines, and other support infrastructure likely to significantly harm coastal resources. Development of offshore oil and gas would also contribute to climate change and ocean acidification, further threatening our coastal and marine ecosystems.

Risking Oregon's clean coast economy for very little offshore oil and gas would be a shortsighted and permanent mistake. Oregon's entire supply of undiscovered economically recoverable offshore oil and gas would only meet domestic oil demand for roughly eight days and gas demand for roughly seven days, at current national consumption rates (attached).

Scientists have documented and definitively proven the harmful ecological impacts from disturbances associated with offshore oil and gas development,[i] the many chemical compounds associated with drilling operations that exert toxic effects on fish and wildlife,[ii,iii] the fact that once released, contaminants persist in the environment,[iv] and that response and mitigation technologies are often inadequate.[v] Even beyond catastrophic spills like the *Exxon Valdez* and *Deepwater Horizon*, minor spills can lead to "chronic toxicity" in the marine environment with "sublethal effects" including "[i]mpairment of feeding mechanisms, growth rates, development rates, energetics, reproductive output, recruitment rates, and increased susceptibility to disease."[vi]

Oceana is working across the country to protect our oceans from the risks of offshore drilling. Here, like many Oregonians, we oppose federal efforts to risk Oregon's treasured coastal and marine resources. The environmental risks are far from justified, and local communities will be asked to shoulder all the risks. Please take this time to support additional, long-term actions to protect our ocean and communities from offshore oil and gas drilling.

Sincerely,

Ben Enticknap
Pacific Campaign Manager and Senior Scientist

Mariel Combs
Pacific Senior Counsel

Attached: Oceana 2018. Oregon's Clean Coast Economy. National report and methodology available: https://usa.oceana.org/publications/reports/clean-coast-economy

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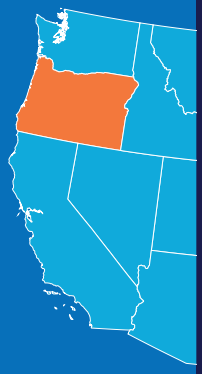
Oregon's Clean Coast Economy



Offshore drilling threatens

NEARLY 39,000 JOBS

and roughly

$1.9 BILLION IN GDP

in Oregon for only

8 DAYS'-WORTH OF OIL

and

7 DAYS'-WORTH OF GAS

The Oregon coast is a major draw for both tourists and locals – lined with rugged bluffs, secluded beaches and scenic towns that offer breathtaking views of the Pacific Ocean. The vibrant coastal environment supports seaside activities with everything from pristine state parks and historic light houses to popular kiting, kayaking and surfing spots. Wildlife sightings are common on the offshore rocks, reefs and islands that dot the Oregon coast, which are important for puffins, harbor seals, California sea lions and pelicans. Gray whales can be seen spouting during their annual migrations. Oregon's clean ocean ecosystem helps drive the coastal economy, in large part through its thriving recreational and commercial fishing industries, which produce substantial catches of Dungeness crab, pink shrimp, Dover sole, rockfish, sablefish and salmon. Not only coastal fishers rely on healthy oceans. Prized recreational fish, like steelhead and salmon, which migrate from the ocean back to freshwater streams need clean waters to survive.

What's at Risk?

New offshore drilling and exploration proposals pose a direct threat to coastal tourism and other local businesses that depend on a healthy and clean marine environment.

FISHING, TOURISM & RECREATION

along Oregon's coast:

SUPPORT

38,868 JOBS

GENERATE

$1.9 BILLION IN GDP

OCEANA #ProtectOurCoast Oceana.org/CleanCoastEconomy

A Bad Deal for Oregon

Risking Oregon's clean coast economy for very little offshore oil and gas would be a shortsighted and permanent mistake. Based on resources that are economically feasible to extract, Oregon's entire supply of undiscovered economically recoverable offshore oil and gas would only meet domestic oil demand for roughly eight days and gas demand for roughly seven days, at current national consumption rates.

A catastrophic spill like the 1969 Santa Barbara blowout off California is too great a risk to Oregon's healthy ocean resources and thriving coastal economies. That disaster, combined with the Refugio Beach spill of 2015 and chronic leaks from decades of everyday oil rig and pipeline activities, have released more than 4 million gallons of oil into the Pacific Ocean. Oil spills in the Pacific have affected at least 935 square miles of ocean, an area over six times the size of Portland. Communities along the Pacific have felt the devastation caused by spreading slicks and the lasting consequences, which include substantial economic hardships from lost fishing and beachgoing opportunities, human health impacts and disturbing effects on marine ecosystems.

Currently, 27 oil platforms stand off the coast of California. The expansion of offshore drilling in the Pacific would further increase the risk of a spill. Offshore drilling for oil and gas is a dirty and dangerous venture that threatens abundant Pacific Ocean resources, which bring in consistent revenue for Oregon year after year. Oil and gas are finite resources; when the oil runs out, so do the jobs.

Off Oregon's coast, the economically recoverable

OIL & GAS

resources would only meet demand for roughly

8 DAYS

and

7 DAYS

respectively.

IT'S NOT WORTH IT.

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TAKE ACTION

Oppose New Offshore Drilling

History has taught us — when we drill, we spill. Help protect our oceans by stopping the expansion of offshore drilling and exploration.

The time to act is now. We must protect our coast, living ocean resources and local economies from the threat of expanded offshore drilling.

For sources and methodology, please visit:
Oceana.org/CleanCoastEconomy

#ProtectOurCoast