

July 16, 2018

Dear Representatives:

As business leaders, elected officials, and key stakeholders who depend on clean coasts for our livelihoods and way of life, we urge you to vote YES on amendments to the Interior Department funding bill to stop new offshore drilling. You have the opportunity to protect our coast against dangerous drilling activities and stand with your constituents on this issue.

These key bipartisan amendments would protect American citizens from the Administration's plans to expand dirty offshore drilling to new areas. Offshore drilling could swiftly and permanently damage coastal resources that millions of Americans depend on. The Atlantic, Pacific, and Gulf coast of Florida support over 2.6 million jobs and generate roughly \$180 billion in GDP, mainly through tourism, fishing, and recreation. These clean ocean industries provide steady jobs and income year after year, but only so long as beaches and coastal waters remain healthy and oil spill free.

The threat of another catastrophic spill like the 1969 Santa Barbara blowout or the 2010 BP *Deepwater Horizon* tragedy is too great to risk our thriving coastal economies and healthy ocean resources. Oil spills have far reaching consequences, including enormous economic losses, human health impacts and disturbing effects on marine ecosystems. Damage to Gulf fisheries from the BP disaster alone could total \$8.7 billion by 2020, and spreading slicks cost the Gulf coast roughly 10 million user-days of beach, fishing, and boating activity. Our coastal communities cannot afford the devastation that comes along with inevitable oil spills.

The development of offshore drilling requires heavy industrialization along the coast in order to move, pump, and process oil from offshore rigs. Not only are these pipelines leaky, but also the addition of large scale oil refineries would dramatically alter the character of our coasts – transforming our beach towns into places scattered with drilling infrastructure and forever changed.

The time is now to take a stand against the Administration's reckless expansion of offshore drilling. We urge you to vote YES on bipartisan amendments to the Interior Department Appropriations bill to block new offshore drilling and protect public waters.

Sincerely,

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