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March 8, 2018

Ms. Kelly Hammerle, Chief  
National Oil and Gas Development and Coordination Branch, Leasing Division  
Office of Strategic Resources  
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management  
45600 Woodland Road  
Sterling, VA 20166-9216

**RE: National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Draft Proposed Program and Notice of Intent to Prepare a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement**

Dear Ms. Hammerle:

The City of Monterey is providing comments on the Draft Proposed Five Year Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Offshore Oil and Gas Leasing Program for 2019 through 2024 proposed by the Department of Interior Bureau of Ocean Energy Management as referenced in Federal Register Volume 83, Number 5 (Monday January 8, 2018) Notices pages 829-834, FR Doc No. 2018-00083.

The City of Monterey requests that the Bureau remove all waters along the Pacific Coast of California including Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) and the Davidson Seamount, added to the Sanctuary in 2008, for consideration from the draft oil and gas leasing program.

The Monterey Bay is a unique coastal resource and our community's dependence on the ocean is inextricable. Annually, millions of people visit the Monterey Bay Aquarium and our community to better understand the Monterey Bay and California Coast's marine mammals, fish and plants. Due to the unique environment, multiple marine education centers and research institutions are located around the bay including the Monterey Bay Aquarium, Moss Landing Marine Laboratories and Stanford's Hopkins Marine Station. People also enjoy our coastal waters for boating, diving and whale watching. PBS's Big Blue Live documentary (<http://www.pbs.org/big-blue-live/home/>) featured our region's diverse wildlife and productive marine ecosystem.

Oil rigs will degrade the aesthetic value of the California coast, increase ocean and air pollution, harass wildlife, and potentially spill fossil fuels into our ocean. These impacts could permanently destroy California's coastal setting and the environmental productivity of the region and entire west coast of the United States.

The City understands that the current program does not consider placing oil and gas production facilities within the boundaries of the original sanctuary; however, Davidson Seamount could be leased and developed and we have grave concerns about impacts to that part of the MBNMS.

There are multiple studies of the Monterey Bay that should be analyzed in any environmental impact statement, including:

MBNMS Site Characterization

<https://montereybay.noaa.gov/sitechar/welcome.html>

Sanctuary Condition Report

<https://montereybay.noaa.gov/research/techreports/tronms2015.html>

Offshore Sanctuary Ecologically Significant Areas

<https://montereybay.noaa.gov/research/techreports/trmbnms2016.html>

Shelf Characterization Image Display

<http://ifame.csUMB.edu/scid/>

Lastly, our City is greatly concerned about our continued reliance on fossil fuels as a country. Fossil fuel emissions cause global temperatures to rise and the ocean's chemistry to change. Our City has joined with surrounding counties to secure a 100% renewable electrical supply through the Monterey Bay Community Power initiative. We hope that the federal government will follow our region's lead on obtaining its energy through clean, renewable sources. We urge the Bureau to concentrate its efforts on producing offshore renewable energy rather than the continued production of fossil fuels. This approach ensures a stable energy supply that will minimize environmental damage in a sensitive area such as Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

Sincerely,



Clyde Roberson  
Mayor  
City of Monterey