



February 24, 2020

The Honorable Joe Fitzgibbon
Washington State Legislature
House Environment and Energy Committee, Chair
231A John L. O'Brien, P.O. Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

Re: Support Senate Bill 6432 to protect Washington's coast

Dear Representative Fitzgibbon and Environment and Energy Committee Members:

On behalf of more than 7,500 West Coast businesses, we are writing to express strong support of Senate Bill 6432 (SB 6432). This bill would extend existing protections prohibiting oil and gas leasing for exploration, development or production to Washington's outer coast waters (shore to three miles) and it would prohibit infrastructure supporting any oil or gas development from the Outer Continental Shelf off Washington, through state waters. We cannot overemphasize the importance of the state legislature moving SB 6432 forward, considering the Trump administration's plans to bring dirty and dangerous drilling to nearly all federal waters – including those off Washington.

Since February of 2018, the Business Alliance for Protecting the Pacific Coast (BAPPC)¹ has served as the leading business voice opposing new and expanded oil and gas development off the Pacific Coast. BAPPC adamantly opposes the expansion of offshore drilling as it poses an unnecessary threat to the long-term health of ocean ecosystems and viability of the coastal businesses we represent.

Washington's shoreline and coastal waters are defining characteristics for the businesses that prosper here. Healthy Pacific ecosystems and clean coasts are drivers for the entire state's economy. In fact, fishing, tourism and recreation industries along the Washington coast provide nearly 128,000 jobs and generate roughly \$10.2 billion in GDP each year.² This reliable and robust economic engine only continues to turn as long as oil development and the looming risk of a spill are not on the horizon.

West Coast communities are already familiar with the devastation that offshore drilling and spilling can bring. In 1969, Santa Barbara experienced one of the nation's worst oil spills. The gushing well remained uncapped for 11 days and an estimated 4.2 million gallons of crude oil were spilled into the sea.³ The 1969 oil spill not only killed

¹ BAPPC at: <https://defendthepacific.org/>

² Oceana. Washington's Clean Coast Economy. Available: <https://usa.oceana.org/sites/default/files/4046/washington.pdf>

³ NOAA. Office of Response and Restoration. Available: <https://response.restoration.noaa.gov/about/media/45-years-after-santa-barbara-oil-spill-looking-historic-disaster-through-technology.html>

thousands of birds, fish, and marine mammals, but also had a devastating impact on commercial fisheries, tourism, and coastal property values.⁴

In addition to toxic oil spills, the inevitable industrialization from offshore drilling would forever change the character of our coast and devalue quality of life throughout our communities. Extracting oil and gas off our coast would require adding large-scale refineries, pipelines and other oil infrastructure onshore. The state legislature has long recognized the importance of keeping Washington's shorelines in the best public interest. It's in our best interest to protect our coast from expanded offshore drilling, which has significant potential to permanently damage business.

Washington is on a path towards clean, renewable energy that creates jobs and bolsters the economy without harming our natural resources. Potential drilling off our coast is entirely at odds with efforts to make a more sustainable future. The cities of Ocean Shores, Westport, Ilwaco, Long Beach, Hoquiam, Aberdeen, Montesano, as well as the City of Seattle, and the Port of Ilwaco have all passed resolutions opposing new offshore drilling. BAPPC strongly supports SB 6432, which will strategically protect the waters off our state should new oil and gas leases be granted at the federal level. Our businesses depend on healthy ocean resources and oil-free coastlines. For the continued success of our local economy, we ask you to pass this SB 6432.

Sincerely,

The Business Alliance for Protecting the Pacific Coast

⁴ GPO Oil Commission. Deep Water, The Gulf Oil Disaster and the Future of Offshore Drilling. Available: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GPO-OILCOMMISSION/pdf/GPO-OILCOMMISSION.pdf>