

November 15, 2024

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The 197 organizations signed are united against the expansion of offshore drilling in our nation's waters, and we are writing to urge your use of the authority granted to you under Section 12(a) of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCSLA) to maximize permanent protections from oil and gas drilling. Withdrawals will safeguard vulnerable coastal communities, advance the transition to clean energy, and build on your climate legacy.

Withdrawing areas from leasing under Section 12(a) is a powerful and durable way to protect vulnerable areas and to prevent additional climate emissions. Section 12(a) of OCSLA gives the President authority to withdraw any unleased areas offshore and ensure that those areas are not offered for sale in future lease sales to the oil and gas industry for development. Withdrawals can be permanent or time limited. Once created, only Congress has the power to revoke the protections. Past administrations have successfully utilized this power to withdraw vulnerable areas from leasing, including the Arctic Ocean, the eastern Gulf, and parts of the Atlantic.

Additional protections are needed both to protect vulnerable coastal communities and to bolster our climate. Impacts from spills, air pollution, and climate change are all hitting low-income and minority communities the hardest. Nearly 40 percent of Americans live in coastal counties, and almost all live near coasts that are not permanently protected from offshore oil and gas development. Rising sea levels and erosion are already forcing some vulnerable coastal communities to relocate as fossil fuel emissions drive the climate crisis. Toxic pollution from refineries and petrochemical facilities disproportionately affects environmental justice communities that are located nearby. Other impacts of development, such as those from oil spills, disproportionately harm Black, Indigenous, and Latino people who rely on fishing or hunting, or other uses of natural resources. The potential for additional oil and gas activities that disproportionately impact environmental justice communities is alarming.

We are confronting a global climate catastrophe, and the oceans are bearing the brunt of global warming. They have absorbed 90 percent of the extra heat created from human-caused carbon. With increased emissions and absorbed heat come warming ocean temperatures, sea-level rise, and the shifting of ocean currents and distributions of marine life. The climate disaster is already wreaking havoc across the United States and along our coasts. Even now, increasingly intense and extreme weather brings dangerous storm surges farther inland, expanding their deadly and

costly impact. Increased flooding and saltwater intrusion are stressing coastal wildlife and threatening critical infrastructure, including roads and drinking water supplies—adding to the dangers coastal communities already experience because of oil spills. These phenomena will continue to worsen if the climate emergency is not further addressed.

Your administration has already shown leadership in meeting the challenge of this crisis, and more must be done to secure a better future. Taking action to protect key, vulnerable areas will safeguard our communities, economies, and ecosystems that depend on clean coasts, as well as prevent billions of tons of greenhouse gas emissions that would accelerate climate change.

By protecting offshore areas, you could also safeguard endangered marine mammals, valuable fisheries, important habitats, and vulnerable coastal communities who depend on clean waters for their economies.

We cannot overstate how reliant coastal communities are on tourism, recreation, and fishing. Coastal counties produce \$10 trillion in goods and services annually, employ nearly 60 million people, and are home to 129 million residents. Opposition to expanded offshore drilling from communities and businesses is vast and well documented. More than 390 communities across the country and over 55,000 businesses on the East Coast, West Coast and Florida's Gulf Coast are on the record in opposition to oil and gas drilling in their waters. Communities in the Gulf of Mexico have borne the brunt of oil and gas drilling, and the systemic pollution created by the industry. Pollution that has imbued them with asthma, lung cancer and other diseases. The Gulf of Mexico has endured extreme catastrophes, like the Deepwater Horizon disaster gushing more than 200 million gallons of oil, and regular oil spills from dilapidated equipment. It cannot continue to be treated as a sacrifice zone. Two recent national polls highlighting youth and Latino voters also indicated overwhelming support for permanent protections from offshore drilling. Additionally, fifteen bills have been introduced in the Congress—from both sides of the aisle and in both chambers—to temporarily or permanently protect parts or all of our various coasts, indicating wide congressional opposition to offshore oil and gas drilling.

The next step is clear: additional unleased federal waters must be permanently protected from the dangers of oil and gas drilling. Again, we urge you to use your authority to maximize permanent protections from offshore oil and gas drilling. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Global/National/Regional Organizations

350.org

American Bird Conservancy

American Sustainable Business Council

Azul

Beyond Plastics

Blue Planet Alliance

Center for Biological Diversity

chilli club

CLEO Institute

Climate First Bank

Creation Justice Ministries

Defenders of Wildlife

DeliverZero

Earthjustice

Endangered Species Coalition

Food & Water Watch

FutureSwell

Global Rewilding Alliance

GreeningUSA

Greenpeace USA

Gullah/Geechee Sea Island Coalition

Healthy Gulf

Healthy Ocean Coalition

Hispanic Access Foundation

Inland Ocean Coalition

International Marine Mammal Project of
Earth Island Institute

Latino Outdoors

Menhaden Defenders

Minorities in Shark Sciences

Mission Blue

Mothers Out Front

National Ocean Protection Coalition

Next 100 Coalition

North American Climate, Conservation and
Environment

Ocean Alliance

Ocean Conservation Research

Ocean Uprise

Oceana

Peace Boat US

Plaine Products

Rachel Carson Council

Sierra Club

Surfrider Foundation

Surfrider Foundation: Student Club Network

Sustainable Ocean Alliance

The 5 Gyres Institute

The Ocean Project

Turtle Island Restoration Network

Urban Ocean Lab

US CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK

Waterkeeper Alliance

Northeast Organizations

350 Mass Berkshires

350Brooklyn

350NYC

Albany Unitarian Universalist Society

Albany UU - Green Sanctuary Team

Bowdoin Sunrise

Capital Region Interfaith Creation Care
Coalition

CCRE—BYO

Citizens' Climate Lobby, Brooklyn

Citizens Concerned About Plastic Pollution

Clean Air Action Fund

Colby College Environmental Coalition

Common Ground Compost

CRICC

CupZero

Defend Our Health

Faith Communities Environmental Network
of Cape Cod

First Parish Framingham Climate Action
Team

Four Paws

Fridays for Future, Capital District NY

Green-Rainbow Party

Howling for Wolves

Keep Massachusetts Beautiful

ZeroWaste.org

Lee Greener Gateway Committee

Lee Land Trust

Maine Council of Churches

MetroWest Climate Solutions

Nassau Hiking & Outdoor Club

New Yorkers for Clean Power

NY Climate Advocacy Project

Ocean River Institute

Oceanic Global Foundation

Protecting Our Waters

Roctrocity

Sheffield Saves

Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, New
York

South Shore Audubon Society

Sunrise NYC

Surfrider Foundation - Massachusetts
Chapter

Surfrider Foundation, Eastern Long Island
Chapter

Surfrider Foundation, New York City
Chapter

Surfrider Foundation-Rhode Island Chapter

Sustainable Duxbury

Sustainable Wellesley

Voices of Wildlife in NH

Wayland Green Team

Mid-Atlantic Organizations

Alliance for a Living Ocean

American Littoral Society

Assateague Coastal Trust

Chesapeake Climate Action Network

Clean Ocean Action

Clean Virginia Waterways

Climate Action Alliance of the Valley

Climate Revolution Action Network

Coalition for Smarter Growth (parent organization is the Piedmont Environmental Council)

DC Surfrider Foundation Chapter

Delaware Audubon Society

Delaware Chapter, Surfrider Foundation

Delaware Concerned Residents for Environmental Justice

Delaware Riverkeeper Network

Hackensack Riverkeeper Inc.

Humans that Care

Jersey Coast Anglers Association

LR Now in Virginia Beach

Lynnhaven River Now in Virginia Beach

New Jersey Environmental Lobby

NY/NJ Baykeeper

Pinelands Preservation Alliance

Plastic Free Delaware

WESPAC Foundation, Inc.

Roanoke Group, Sierra Club

Rockfish Valley Foundation

Save Barnegat Bay

Save Coastal Wildlife

Shark River Cleanup Coalition

Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project Inc.

Surfrider Foundation South Jersey Chapter

Surfrider Foundation, Jersey Shore Chapter

The Association of NJ Environmental Commissions

The Teach a Person to Fish Society

Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center

Virginia Association for Parks

Virginia Conservation Network

Waterspirit

Wetlands Watch

Wild Virginia

Southeast Organizations

Alabama Interfaith Power & Light

Animal Wonders KC

Beach Mart Inc

Beaches Go Green

Biscayne Bay Marine Health Coalition

Cape Fear River Watch

Carolina Ocean Alliance

Charleston Waterkeeper
Chirping Birds Society
Climate Reality Project, North Broward and Palm Beach County, FL Chapter
Cultivating Lives Educational Services Inc
Debris Free Oceans
Elders Climate Action - Florida Chapter
Environmental Youth Council
Florida Wildlife Federation
Friends of Matanzas
Gullah Geechee Chamber of Commerce
Gullah/Geechee Fishing Association
Interfaith Power & Light
Loxahatchee Group, Sierra Club
Miami Waterkeeper
NC Conservation Network
North Carolina Coastal Federation
One Hundred Miles
Penn Center
ReThink Energy Florida
S.C. Coastal Conservation League
Sea Turtle Conservancy
SODA - Stop Offshore Drilling in the Atlantic
Southern Alliance for Clean Energy
Surfrider Foundation Charlotte Chapter
Surfrider Foundation Florida Keys Chapter
Surfrider Foundation-Georgia Chapter

The People's Justice Council
VolunteerCleanup.Org
Wild Cumberland
Pacific Organizations
California Environmental Voters
California Marine Sanctuary Foundation
Center for the blue economy
Clean the Pacific
Endangered Habitats League
Environmental Center of San Diego
Environmental Protection Information Center
Friends of the Mariana Trench
Kua'aina Ulu 'Auamo
Northern Chumash Tribal Council
Orange County Coastkeeper
Pacific Whale Foundation
Research Renewal Institute
San Diego Green Infrastructure Consortium
Save Our Shores
Seattle Aquarium
Surfrider Foundation San Diego County Chapter
The Escondido Creek Conservancy
WILDCOAST
Wishtoyo Foundation
Yaak Valley Forest Council