



June 16, 2025
Ms. Kelly Hammerle
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
U.S. Department of Interior
45600 Woodland Road,
Sterling, VA 20166-9216

RE: Opposition to New Lease Sales in the Proposed 5-Year OCS Oil & Gas Leasing Program from Central and Northern California Coastal Organization, Surfrider Foundation

Dear Secretary,

As an organization that works for clean and healthy coastal environments, we write to express our strong opposition to new oil and gas lease sales in the next 5-Year OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program. Specifically, we ask that you protect the Central and Northern California OCS Planning Regions and all other U.S. waters from new oil and gas development. The expansion of offshore oil and gas development in Central and Northern California would cause significant and unnecessary negative impacts to our state's marine ecosystems, wildlife, coastal communities, and vital recreation and tourism industries. Instead of approving new oil and gas leasing in U.S. waters, our nation should prioritize clean energy by investing in renewable energy development.

Offshore oil and gas development in new areas would require seismic surveys, drilling operations, oil transport by tankers, and the installation of platforms, pipelines, and other infrastructure. Collectively these activities would significantly damage the environment, marine wildlife, coastal economies and ways of life. New offshore drilling would also expose the marine environment and coastal communities to the risks of another catastrophic oil spill. Finally, new offshore oil and gas leasing would exacerbate the climate crisis as our nation and world struggle to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

An overwhelming majority of the public is opposed to new offshore oil and gas drilling. To date, nearly 400 municipalities, 2,500 elected officials, 59,000 businesses and 500,000 fishing families across the United States have formally opposed new offshore oil and gas development. Further, according to a national poll, an estimated [64% of registered U.S. voters](#) are opposed to new offshore drilling. The widespread opposition to new offshore drilling in U.S. waters is bipartisan and reflected throughout various regions of the country. Opposition to offshore drilling along the Central and Northern California has been demonstrated by the local communities, non-profit organizations, state, and federal government agencies through support for the establishment and expansion of Marine Protected Areas including a 2015 expansion of Greater Farallones and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuaries that increase protected area by more than 2,700 square miles. "Protecting the California coast from new offshore drilling is critical not just for our environment, but for the communities that rely on clean beaches and a healthy ocean. Here in Santa Cruz, we've



seen the devastating impacts pollution can have—and we stand united in calling for a permanent ban on new oil and gas leases off our coast.”

— Darcie Connell, Interim Chair, Surfrider Foundation Santa Cruz Chapter

The federal offshore drilling program directly impacts our nation’s ocean recreation, tourism, and fisheries industries that generate over [\\$520 billion annually](#). These industries depend on a clean coastal environment to support a combined 2.5 million jobs across the United States. Allowing new offshore drilling will damage public resources that these industries depend upon by generating harmful impacts through every phase of the drilling process. Such drilling will subject communities to the ever-present risks of oil spills and onshore impacts which can be catastrophic to both the environment and economy.

Coastal businesses depend on clean beaches and waters, abundant wildlife, and scenic viewsheds – all of which would be compromised by the expansion of offshore drilling and an increased risk of spills. A major spill would cause catastrophic impacts to these coastal communities, a truth we should have learned from previous spills that have had long-lasting impacts on local tourism rates. The 2007 Cosco Busan oil spill in San Francisco Bay had clean up costs of \$70 million and the settlement included \$32.3 million for restoration of injured natural resources and compensation for lost recreational uses. Further oil and gas development would only increase the potential for harmful and costly damages.

Finally, oil and gas development disproportionately impacts lower-income and communities of color who, too often, bear the brunt of fossil fuel operations. In the Gulf, the oil and gas industry has contributed to the extensive loss of coastal wetlands, leaving communities more vulnerable to flooding and extreme weather events. Meanwhile, onshore infrastructure associated with offshore leasing pollutes frontline communities and damages public health. The Department must account for these inequities in its analysis of potential new oil and gas lease sales in public waters.

In summary, the Surfrider Foundation and our local chapters from Monterey to Humboldt ask you to protect all U.S. waters including the Central and Northern California OCS planning regions from any new oil and gas leasing in the next 5-Year OCS Oil and Gas Program. We appreciate the opportunity to provide these comments to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management.

Sincerely,

Bill Hickman,
Surfrider Central California Regional Sr. Manager

Sara Heintzelman,
Surfrider Northern California Regional Manager