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Comment from Captiva Community Panel

Posted by the **Bureau of Ocean Energy Management** on Jan 20, 2026

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The Captiva Community Panel is a body representing the citizens of Captiva, approximately 1,000 persons. The panel serves Captiva by maintaining the historic pattern of development on this barrier island. Such historical growth has consisted of unobtrusive, low-density residential use coupled with limited commercial development and vehicular traffic. Sensitive to such common concerns, Captiva community planning is to be maintained in consideration of an environment consisting of clean offshore waters, diverse and healthy marine life and robust native vegetation

As a community situated on a barrier island in the Gulf, Captivans live in harmony with nature, striving to protect our shoreline, natural habitats, water quality, mangrove fringes and limit pollutants that harm our air, water, and dark skies. Our unique ecosystems are vital to our tourism-driven economy that relies on a healthy environment. People come from all over the world to walk on our beaches, play in our waters, and hope to catch a glimpse of one of the rare species that we are lucky enough to share an island with.

Our livelihoods are directly linked to the health of the Gulf waters, our beaches, coastal ecosystems and the wildlife that call them home. Putting these incredibly important resources at risk by expanding Oil Drilling Leases in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico (EGM).

The devastation of a potential spill off Florida's coast could wreak havoc on our ecosystems, tourism-based economies, and quality of life. The devastation wrought in 2010 by the deadly Deepwater Horizon spill resulted in over 3.19 million barrels of oil spilled into the Gulf with fishing industry losses of $8.7 billion and countless marine animals killed. Though a portion of the oil was recovered, millions of gallons remain at sea while we are yet to fully understand the impacts of this massive disaster on our country. Gulf loop currents could bring any oil spills directly to the coastlines of Southwest Florida, where tourism accounts for $3.5 billion annually in Lee County alone. A similar incident that deposits oil on the beaches of Captiva would be devastating to our community.

Expanding oil drilling in the gulf at this time is not necessary and will impact current uses. Global renewable energy production surpassed coal and gas for the first time this year. Technology and innovation for clean energy alternatives is growing worldwide. Expansion of drilling leases to areas currently protected will impact areas of strategic military importance and are incompatible with existing critical military training and testing exercises in the area. Additionally, 77% of offshore oil leased acres are not producing, making these

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new leases unnecessary. Simply put, the benefits from drilling off of the coast of Florida is not worth the risk. We on the island of Captiva hope you will consider the importance of the current protections the ESA offers to our lives, our livelihoods and the environment they rely on, and reject the proposed plan to expand Oil Drilling Leases in the EGM.
Sincerely,
David Mintz
President, Captiva Community Panel

CAPTIVA COMMUNITY PANEL (2026)
Members: Michael Bennett / Jay Brown / Linda Laird / Bruce McDonald / David Mintz / Bob Rando / Jon Rosen / Ken Suarez / Margarethe Thye-Miville / John Wade / Sandy Stilwell Youngquist

Attachments 1

final_CCP_OilDrilling_Comments

Download (https://downloads.regulations.gov/BOEM-2025-0483-3744/attachment_1.pdf)

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