11th National OCS Oil & Gas Leasing Program
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
Federal Register Notice (comment deadline is January 23, 2026)
RE: Opposition to New Lease Sales in the Draft Proposed 5-Year OCS Oil & Gas Leasing Program

January 20, 2026
Dear Secretary,

The Environmental Confederation of Southwest Florida (ECOSWF), an umbrella organization for representing environmental, civic and individuals that are engaged in the preservation of Florida's unique ecosystem.
ECOSWF's members enjoy recreating on Florida beaches. Florida's beaches are a very important economic driver as well as being beautiful.

ECOSWF opposes the 11th National OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Draft Proposed Program because it failed to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement, or complete an environmental review disclosing the potential harms to the public before proceeding with offshore oil sales. ECOSWF is concerned about ECOSWF's members vulnerability to the myriad risks associated with oil drilling, especially without environmental review.

Additionally, opening of lease sales for the Eastern Gulf's 'Program Area B' which is only a mere 100 miles or 3 nautical miles from the coast of Florida, reduces the previous boundary of 250 miles. The territory is 3 nautical miles outside state jurisdiction, which guarantees "to conserve and protect its natural resources and scenic beauty" and prevents "drilling for exploration or extraction of oil or natural gas" in our State Constitution Article II Section 7. To disregard this makes no sense either environmentally or economically.

The protection of the Eastern Gulf is incredibly important, as it serves as a refuge for marine wildlife from constant noise and pollution of offshore rigs and provides a buffer zone protecting Florida's coast and economy from regular spills and catastrophes like Deepwater Horizon in 2010. Further, offshore oil drilling comes with significant environmental, public health, and economic risk. Environmentally, drilling increases the rate of oil spills, disrupts food chains, and contributes to cumulative effects of climate change. Economically, subsequent pollution and downstream effects will threaten Florida's dominant tourism industry, which filed $1.5 billion in lost earning claims after Deepwater Horizon. Air pollution from drilling contributes to a public health risk, with air pollution from fossil fuels being responsible for 13% of total deaths in people aged 14 and older in the US.

THEREFORE, ECOSWF request you DENY any New Lease Sales in the Draft Proposed 5-Year OCS Oil & Gas Leasing Program

Respectfully submitted,
Becky Ayech
President
Environmental Confederation of Southwest Florida