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Comment regarding BOEM-2025-0483

Island Packers is opposed to opening up gas and oil leases along our coastline. From a company perspective - There will be potential impacts to our business with increased boat activity and areas to be avoided as prospecting and drilling take place. If these areas occur along our standard pathways, altering course to go around them adds time and money to our bottom line. Our other concern is that we won't be the only traffic having to avoid these areas. All marine traffic will be funneled into narrow corridors. More traffic in close proximity to one another increases the risk factor for collisions, something that, as a company that regularly carries up to 145 passengers at a time, creates concern.

We are also striving to minimize our reliance on fossil fuels, using renewable diesel for our fleet and working towards green sourcing our energy needs, including looking into hybrid engines. Green energy is the reality of the future, and we feel should be the focus of the energy management field rather than the extraction of fossil fuels.

From an industry perspective – In 2024 Channel Islands National Park reported that 263,000 visitors spent approximately $17.7 million in communities near the Park. This spending resulted in a total economic benefit of $24.9 million for the local area. People come to Parks to evoke a sense of awe and wonder; seeking to experience breathtaking scenery, witness rare wildlife, and feel a sense of connection to something larger than themselves. This National Park is nicknamed the North American Galapagos. Its ecosystem is found nowhere else on earth. The National Marine Sanctuary that surrounds this Park is one of the most diverse and abundant ocean ecosystems on the planet. Over 25 different species of cetaceans have been documented here, along with 6 species of pinnipeds, dozens of species of seabirds, and multiple rare sightings of animals like basking sharks and sea turtles. We have a priceless gem off this coast, one that is becoming even more valuable as more and more natural spaces become compromised and disappear. We cannot allow anything to jeopardize that. Other countries have realized that ecotourism brings in more money and is more sustainable than harvesting the resources in that ecosystem. We need to as well.

The revenue that the oil and gas industry projects for this region is finite. Oil is a non-renewable resource. When the oil runs out, the industry disappears, and the money along with it. That is playing out right now, as a third of the current rigs in the Santa Barbara Channel are currently in the process of being decommissioned. If we treat her right, Mother Nature will provide a constant source of wonder and awe, and along with it a constant revenue stream through tourism. Science and history have shown us that the oil industry is not kind to ecosystems. Opening our offshore waters to oil and gas leases is not the way to take care of our precious gem.

Sincerely –
Island Packers Corporation