January 22, 2026

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 the Business Alliance for Protecting the Pacific Coast, the Business Alliance for Protecting the Atlantic Coast, and E2

Dear Ms. Kelly Hammerle,

We write to you on behalf of the Business Alliance for Protecting the Pacific Coast,the Business Alliance for Protecting the Atlantic Coast, and E2 which together represent over 50,000 businesses, 500,000 fishing families, and 11,000 business leaders opposed to the expansion of offshore drilling. Our collective membership acutely understands the significant economic activity and value generated by a healthy coastal ecosystem, including job creation and revenue generation from tourism, recreation and healthy fisheries. Conversely, our members understand the economic risks presented by offshore oil and gas drilling and recognize that our nation's vibrant coastal economies rely on a clean and healthy coastal environment. As such, we write to express our strong opposition to new oil and gas lease sales in the Draft Proposed 2026–2031 National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program.

The proposed federal offshore drilling program would bring significant threats to American ocean recreation, tourism, and fisheries industries that generate over $230 billion annually. These industries depend on a clean coastal environment to support a combined 2.6 million jobs across the United States.[1] Allowing new offshore drilling - which generates harmful impacts throughout every phase of the drilling process - will damage the public resources that these industries depend on. Our marine economy makes coastal communities vibrant and prosperous, and responsibly managed fisheries and well-protected beaches can drive economic activity for years to come. The same cannot be said about oil; drilling subjects communities to the ever-present risks of oil spills and onshore impacts which can be catastrophic to the coastal economy and drive further economic loss by diminishing the

[1] NOAA (2024) NOAA Regional and State Report on the U.S. Marine Economy. In: Office for Coastal Management. Available: https://coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/data/enow.html

value of coastal real estate investments, state and municipal tax revenues and impacting marine and human health.

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 onshore infrastructure. Together, these activities would degrade communities' quality of life, and the irreplaceable coastal ecosystems those communities' livelihoods are built upon. New offshore drilling would also expose coastal communities to the risks of another catastrophic oil spill, such as the 2010 BP Oil Spill disaster in the Gulf of Mexico which cost the region 25,000 jobs, 10 million user days[2] for tourism and recreation, and as much as a 15% loss in real estate sales and investments.[3] Just the perception of impact led to major declines in these industries after the spill, and there have been untold impacts on the health and livelihoods of Gulf communities.

Since the *Deepwater Horizon* catastrophe, there have been more than 7,300 oil spills[4] in federal waters since 2010, an average of over one spill every day. Within that timeframe we saw not one, but two major oil spills off Southern California. The 2015 Refugio Oil Spill and the 2021 Huntington Beach oil spill[5] both devastated commercial fishing grounds, shut down beaches, and significantly dampened coastal economic activity by releasing a combined 480,000 gallons of crude oil spreading down the California coast. Alaska also knows the impacts of a major oil spill all too well. When Exxon's Valdez oil supertanker ran aground on Bligh Reef Prince William's Sound in 1989, it spilled over 10 million gallons of oil. It's not a matter of if there will be another oil spill, but when and how severe. History has established that despite repeated assurances from the industry, there is no such thing as safe offshore oil drilling. And without adequate teams to respond to a spill[6], coastal economies will suffer. These job creators are already facing an uphill battle against intensifying extreme weather events, sea level rise, and erosion. The associated costs from these disturbances to coastlines across the country are only expected to rise; we cannot compound them with the costs of an oil spill.

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[2] Oceana (2020). Hindsight 2020: Lessons We Cannot Ignore from the BP Disaster. Available: https://usa.oceana.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/drill-19-0004_bp_deepwater_horizon_anniversary_report_m1_finalwdoi_singlepages.pdf
[3]Clear Capital (2010) Impact of BP Oil Spill Reaches Beyond Gulf Coast. In: ClearCapital.com, Inc. Available: https://www.clearcapital.com/impact-of-bp-oilspill-reaches-beyond-gulf-coast/

[4] https://www.bsee.gov/sites/bsee.gov/files/2023-08/Performance%20Metrics%202010-2022%20-%20Data%20Tables.pdf
[5] https://www.coastal.ca.gov/publiced/oilspills.html
[6] https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/08/climate/noaa-layoffs-trump.html

Oil and gas development disproportionately impacts vulnerable communities who, too often, bear the brunt of fossil fuel operations. In the Gulf of Mexico, the oil industry has contributed to the extensive loss of coastal wetlands, leaving communities more exposed to flooding and extreme weather events, events that dampen coastal economic output. Meanwhile, onshore infrastructure associated with offshore leasing pollutes vulnerable communities and damages public health, bringing increased medical costs and reducing work productivity from illness.

Proposals to open more coastal areas to the threats posed by offshore drilling not only unreasonably put our essential coastal economy and coastal communities at risk; they are unnecessary. The US is already the largest oil producer in the world and has broken production records three years in a row. We have been a net exporter of oil and gas since 2020[7] and 75% of the acreage the oil industry currently holds in more than 2,000 leases is sitting unused.[8] In addition, we now have better, cheaper and cleaner energy options to pursue that do not pose any risk of oil spills or leaks.

Additionally, an overwhelming majority of the public joins us in our opposition to new offshore oil and gas drilling. To date, nearly 400 municipalities and 2,500 elected officials[9] across the United States as well as governors from coast to coast have formally opposed new offshore oil and gas development. The widespread opposition to new offshore drilling in U.S. waters is bipartisan and reflected throughout various regions of the country.

Healthy coastlines drive job creation and investment by supporting thriving tourism, recreation, and fishery industries. Every asset is dependent on a healthy marine environment, but offshore drilling threatens that and so much more. It is simply not worth the unjustifiable risk to our nation's economic engine.

We appreciate the opportunity to bring our economic expertise to this issue and look forward to working with the federal government to revise the plan to take all proposed areas out and pursue other actions to ensure a bright future for coastal economies.

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[7] https://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/oil-and-petroleum-products/imports-and-exports.php ; https://www.eia.gov/pressroom/releases/press577.php

[8] BOEM (2023) Combined Leasing Report As of February 1, 2023. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. Available: https://www.boem.gov/sites/default/files/documents/oil-gas-energy/leasing/Lease%20Stats%202023.pdf

[9] https://stopthedrill.org/

We ask you to reject the proposal to open our coasts to any new oil and gas leasing in the 11th National OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program. Finalizing a leasing program with no new leases for offshore drilling will secure the future of America's coastal communities, our national economy, and millions of jobs.

Sincerely,

Grant Bixby, Founding Member, Business Alliance for Protecting the Pacific Coast
Sandra Bundy, President, Business Alliance for Protecting the Atlantic Coast
Bob Keefe, Executive Director, E2

The Business Alliance for Protecting the Pacific Coast (BAPPC) is the leading business organization working to ensure the long-term health and economic vitality of the Pacific seaboard through responsible stewardship of the coastal and ocean waters. We represent over 8,100 businesses united in opposition to new leases for offshore drilling.

The Business Alliance for Protecting the Atlantic Coast (BAPAC) represents over 42,000 businesses working together to protect our coastal communities from new and expanded oil and gas development. Our alliance works to ensure the long-term health and vitality of our Atlantic coast economy through responsible stewardship of our coastal and ocean waters.

E2 is a national, nonpartisan group of business leaders, investors, and professionals from every sector of the economy who advocate for smart policies that are good for the economy and good for the environment. E2's more than 11,000 members and supporters work and do business in every state in the country, coming from diverse business backgrounds ranging from clean energy and clean tech to real estate and finance and beyond. Our members have been involved in the financing, founding or development of more than 2,500 companies that have created more than 600,000 jobs, and manage more than $100 billion in venture and private equity capital.

BAPPC
BUSINESS ALLIANCE FOR PROTECTING THE PACIFIC COAST

BAPAC
BUSINESS ALLIANCE FOR PROTECTING THE ATLANTIC COAST

E2 ECONOMY +ENVIRONMENT