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Comment from One Planet Brands

Posted by the **Bureau of Ocean Energy Management** on Jan 26, 2026

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To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my unequivocal and strong opposition to any proposal, consideration, or action that would open California's National Marine Sanctuaries or protected coastal waters to oil and gas leasing, exploration, or drilling.

California's Marine Sanctuaries are among the most ecologically valuable and economically vital marine ecosystems in the world. They were established specifically to protect biodiversity, safeguard coastal communities, preserve cultural heritage, and ensure the long-term health of our ocean economy. Allowing oil and gas development within or adjacent to these protected areas directly undermines their purpose and places irreplaceable public resources at unacceptable risk.

The scientific and historical record is clear: offshore oil and gas drilling poses persistent threats, including oil spills, chronic pollution, seismic damage to marine life, degradation of water quality, and long-term harm to fisheries and tourism. Even with modern technology, spills and leaks are not hypothetical risks—they are documented realities with devastating consequences for marine mammals, seabirds, kelp forests, coral systems, and coastal livelihoods.

Moreover, opening Marine Sanctuaries to fossil fuel development contradicts California's stated climate leadership and commitments to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, transitioning to renewable energy, and protecting frontline coastal and Indigenous communities. Expanding oil and gas extraction at a time of accelerating climate impacts—sea level rise, ocean acidification, marine heatwaves, and species collapse—is both environmentally irresponsible and economically shortsighted.

California's coastal economy depends on a healthy ocean. Fishing, tourism, recreation, and conservation-supported jobs generate billions of dollars annually and sustain communities up and down the coast. These benefits far outweigh the short-term gains of fossil fuel extraction, which leave behind long-term

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environmental liabilities borne by the public.

Marine Sanctuaries are not bargaining chips. They are public trusts, established for the benefit of current and future generations. Any attempt to weaken their protections for oil and gas interests represents a profound breach of that trust.

I urge you to:

Publicly and unequivocally oppose any oil and gas leasing, drilling, or seismic testing in or near California Marine Sanctuaries

Uphold and strengthen existing sanctuary protections

Prioritize clean energy development that does not endanger marine ecosystems or coastal communities

Californians overwhelmingly support ocean protection, climate action, and a transition away from fossil fuels. I expect our leaders and agencies to reflect these values and to defend our Marine Sanctuaries without compromise.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. I look forward to your clear commitment to protecting California's ocean legacy.

Sincerely,

Nova Covington
Santa Cruz County Business Owner, California
Founder, Protect Our Mother.org 1% for the Planet Non-profit

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