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Comment from Plant-Based Advocates

Posted by the **Bureau of Ocean Energy Management** on Jan 21, 2026

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I urge the Administration to not re-open any closed or create any new oil drilling or exploratory in California, Alaska or the Gulf of Mexico. I strongly urge the Department of the Interior to keep the coasts of these areas permanently closed to new offshore oil and gas exploration and development. As a surf instructor, my son, like many people, depends on a clean shore and healthy environment free of pollutants.

History shows that offshore drilling poses serious and lasting risks. The 1969 Santa Barbara oil spill devastated marine life, coated beaches with oil, and caused widespread economic and ecological harm, becoming a defining environmental disaster for the state. More recently, the 2015 Refugio oil spill and the 2021 Huntington Beach pipeline spill again demonstrated that offshore oil development and its associated infrastructure are inherently risky and that spills can and do occur, even with modern technology. These incidents damaged sensitive habitats, harmed fisheries and wildlife, and disrupted coastal communities and local economies. Sixteen years after the Deepwater Horizon disaster, the wildlife and ecosystems of the Gulf of Mexico have still not recovered.

The coastlines of California, Alaska and the Gulf are some of the most ecologically diverse and economically valuable in the nation. Our coastal waters support world-class fisheries, marine wildlife, and a tourism and recreation economy that provides millions of jobs and billions of dollars in economic activity each year. Offshore drilling, seismic testing, and related industrial activities pose serious risks to these resources, as demonstrated by past spills that caused long-term damage to California’s beaches, wildlife, and coastal communities.

Expanding offshore oil and gas leasing directly contradicts undermines efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, address climate change, and invest in clean, renewable energy. At a time of accelerating sea-level rise, ocean acidification, and stronger coastal storms, opening new areas to offshore drilling would put communities and ecosystems at even greater risk. Cleaner energy sources are more readily available than they have been in the past, and provide a reliable alternative to riskier offshore oil development.

Offshore oil development would have negative effects on California, Alaska and the Gulf, including tourism, agriculture, and commercial and recreational fishing. I respectfully request that the Department of the Interior exclude all waters offshore in these areas from the final 11th National OCS Program and prioritize policies that safeguard our coast while accelerating the transition to clean energy.

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Attachments 1

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