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Comment from Save the Sonoma Coast

Posted by the **Bureau of Ocean Energy Management** on Jan 20, 2026

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I am writing to respectfully urge the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) to reject any new offshore oil and gas leases off the coast of California. Expanding offshore drilling in this region would impose unnecessary risks on coastal communities, local economies, and the exceptionally rich marine ecosystems of the Pacific Coast.

California's coastal economy generates tens of billions of dollars annually through tourism, outdoor recreation, commercial and recreational fisheries, ports, and research institutions. These jobs and businesses depend on clean coastlines and healthy marine environments. Past spill events—including the 1969 Santa Barbara blowout and the 2015 Refugio pipeline spill—demonstrate that even a single incident can cause lasting economic damage, degrade fisheries, and require expensive cleanup efforts that fall on the public.

The ecological stakes are equally significant. The California Current Large Marine Ecosystem is one of the most biodiverse marine regions in the world, supporting whales, sea lions, seabirds, kelp forests, cold-water reefs, and numerous threatened and endangered species. Offshore drilling increases the risk of spills, chronic pollution, underwater noise impacts, and long-term habitat disruption at a time when ocean health is already under stress from climate change.

Importantly, opposition to new offshore drilling in California is strongly bipartisan. Coastal cities and counties, Tribal governments, fishing groups, small businesses, and residents across the political spectrum have repeatedly made clear that protecting the coastline is a shared priority. Californians—regardless of party—value clean beaches, healthy fisheries, and resilient local economies over expanded fossil fuel development.

For these reasons, I urge BOEM to adopt a leasing program that includes no new offshore oil and gas leases off California's coast. Protecting this region is essential to sustaining local economies, safeguarding marine biodiversity, and honoring the broad public consensus that our coastline should remain clean and

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thriving.

Thank you for considering these comments.

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