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Santa Cruz Area Chamber of Commerce

Christian Pellecchia, Board President
JE Dunn Construction

Yvette Brooks, Board Vice President
United Way Santa Cruz County

Dan Smart, First Past President
La Bahia

Stephanie Munoz, Board Secretary
BTF Enterprises

Rick Weiss, Board Treasurer
Bay Federal Credit Union

Bonnie Lipscomb
City of Santa Cruz

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The Glass Jar

Nicole Coburn
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James Abbott
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Santa Cruz Signs

Omid Aminifard
Santa Cruz Seaside Company

Stephanie Connor Kent, RN, MN
Sutter Maternity & Surgery Center

Jennifer Cosby
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West Coast Community Bank

Kristin Fabos
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Golden State Warriors/Santa Cruz Warriors

Anthony Pagliaro
Dominican Hospital Foundation

Sean Woodruff
Hyatt Place

Matthew James
Spencer Fane

Sandi Eason
Pacific Valley Bank

Duf Fischer
Santa Cruz Chamber Ambassadors

(831) 457-3713
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January 23, 2026

Ms. Kelly Hammerle
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (VAM-LD)
45600 Woodland Road, Sterling, VA 20166-9216

RE: Comments for the 11th National OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program

Dear Ms. Hammerle,

On behalf of the Santa Cruz Area Chamber of Commerce, we write in strong opposition to any proposal for offshore drilling or deep-sea mining along the Pacific Coast. These activities place our coastal economy, marine ecosystems, and community identity at serious and unnecessary risk.

Santa Cruz County and the greater Monterey Bay Area depend on a healthy, thriving coastline. Ocean recreation and tourism are core economic drivers, with surf-related businesses alone generating more than $150 million annually for Santa Cruz, along with millions more in related visitor spending. Hundreds of thousands of visitors come each year to experience the natural beauty, clean air, and sense of awe offered by our coastline. This experience would be fundamentally undermined by industrial oil infrastructure offshore. In addition, commercial and recreational fishing, which support both local jobs and regional food systems, would also face significant disruption.

Furthermore, Monterey Bay is one of the biologically richest marine regions in the world. Offshore drilling and deep-sea mining threaten this extraordinary biodiversity and the natural systems that sustain it. Past spills along the California coast have shown that offshore extraction carries unavoidable risks, resulting

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in the loss of marine wildlife such as whales, sea otters, seabirds, and other species critical to ocean health.

Much of the Pacific Coast is protected by a chain of National Marine Sanctuaries, including our own Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Opening the door to drilling or mining in or near these waters places our fisheries, tourism economy, and coastal communities at unacceptable risk.

For these reasons, the Santa Cruz Area Chamber of Commerce strongly urges you to oppose offshore drilling and deep-sea mining along the Pacific Coast and to uphold long-standing protections for our ocean, our economy, and our way of life.

Sincerely,

Kristen Brown
Executive Director
Santa Cruz Area Chamber of Commerce

kbrown@santacruzchamber.org