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December 19, 2017

Secretary Ryan Zinke  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington DC 20240

RE: Opposition to New Offshore Oil Drilling off the California Coast

Dear Secretary Zinke,

The Monterey Peninsula Chamber of Commerce (MPCC) is dedicated to supporting the success of our members and promoting the regional economy. New offshore oil and gas drilling off the coast of California is inconsistent with our vision of championing Monterey County as an engine of innovation and prosperity. The incredible sea and landscapes inherent in the local geography of our region are vital to the prosperity of the business community and are a critical component of our quality of life. The Monterey Peninsula's unique natural environment is an economic driver, bringing hundreds of millions of dollars in tourist spending annually and provides a significant revenue stream for local government to pay for local government services. New offshore drilling creates an increased risk of oil spills which would jeopardize the vitality of our local businesses, the health of our residents, and the safety of marine wildlife that call these ocean waters home.

Residents and visitors enjoy Monterey County's recreational, commercial, and educational activities, all of which support our local economy. Our county's residents value our state's ocean and coastal waters, which provide habitat to a vast array of wildlife, including fish, whales, sea turtles, and birds that depend on a healthy and clean environment. Tourism and recreation industries alone support more than 26,000 jobs and generate more than \$2.3 billion dollars in Monterey County annually. New offshore oil and gas drilling and exploration puts these resources at risk.

In addition, opening new areas off California's coast to offshore drilling will deepen the state's dependence on fossil fuels and undermine its efforts to address climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and moving toward renewable energy.

California has not permitted new oil drilling leases since 1969 and no new leases have been federally granted off the state since 1984. With increasing threats to the oceans, it is more important than ever to safeguard the health of the Pacific Ocean.

For these reasons outlined above, the Monterey Peninsula Chamber of Commerce opposes inclusion of any offshore drilling tracts in any Outer Continental Shelf Planning Area on the California Coast in the pending 2019-2024 Draft Proposed Program and any other future National Programs.

Sincerely,

Jody Hansen  
President and CEO

cc: U.S. Congressional Delegation  
Mr. Walter Cruickshank, Acting Director, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management  
The Honorable Edmund G. Brown Jr.