



Offshore Drilling Fuels the Climate Crisis and Threatens the Economy

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[Oceana.org/ClimateCrisis](https://oceana.org/ClimateCrisis)

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ENVIRONMENT

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Offshore Drilling Fuels the Climate Crisis and Threatens the Economy

Dirty and dangerous offshore oil drilling threatens our ocean, while exacerbating the climate crisis. Our coastal communities and economies demand bold action to create a better future. This must include protecting our coasts. We can fight the climate crisis and safeguard our coastal economy by advancing clean energy and permanently protecting our coasts from offshore drilling.

Combating the climate crisis requires preventing new offshore drilling

Greenhouse gas pollution drives climate change, which harms human health and our ocean.¹ Permanent offshore drilling protections for all federal waters can prevent over 19 billion tons of greenhouse gas emissions, which is equivalent to taking every car in the nation off the road for 15 years – or as much as almost three times the entire U.S annual emissions.² We know that once oil is extracted from our ocean, it is transported, refined and burned. Oil production is energy intensive and generates greenhouse gas pollutants like carbon dioxide and methane during every step of the process from exploration to consumption.³ Ending new drilling can prevent these associated emissions.

Climate change is already impacting everyone, including those who live along the coasts. As a result of increasingly intense and extreme weather, dangerous storm surges push farther inland, expanding their deadly and costly impact.⁴ Sea level is rising and destructive flooding is becoming more frequent and severe.⁴ Increased flooding and saltwater intrusion stress coastal wildlife and threaten critical infrastructure, including roads and drinking water supplies.⁵ Continued fossil fuel development will only worsen these hazards and more, including forest fires and landslides.⁵ Greenhouse gas emissions cause costly damages. Permanently protecting our coasts from new oil development can prevent over \$720 billion in damages to people, property and the environment.² This would be like losing the entire economy of a

major city, like Washington D.C., Boston or Atlanta, for a year.

Drilling protections safeguard coastal economies

Offshore drilling pollutes our coasts through normal operations and leads to hundreds of spills every year, threatening coastal communities that rely on clean air and water.^{6,7}

According to the latest government data, our clean coast economy supports around 3.3 million American jobs and \$250 billion in GDP through activities like tourism, recreation and fishing.⁸ With a clean and healthy ocean, coastal businesses can continue to create jobs and opportunity for generations to come. In contrast, drilling for oil and gas relies on a finite resource. When the oil runs out, so do the jobs, leaving behind a legacy of coastal industrialization and pollution.

Catastrophic oil spills, like the 1969 Santa Barbara blowout and the 2010 BP *Deepwater Horizon* disaster, pose a great risk to coastal economies that depend upon a healthy ocean to survive. Toxic oil poisons marine wildlife, causes beach closures and shuts down lucrative fishing areas.⁹ Permanently protecting our coasts from offshore drilling will safeguard our coastal economies from the next oil disaster.

Protection from offshore drilling supports a transition away from fossil fuels toward clean, renewable energy

If we keep burning fossil fuels at current rates, the impacts will wreak havoc on our ocean and coastal communities.¹⁰ The worsening climate is a threat to every American, and low-income and other marginalized communities will experience disproportionately worse impacts.⁵ We must act now to find just, equitable solutions to mitigate the dangerous and costly effects of climate change.

Building our clean energy future will require investments in responsibly developed renewable energy, and the ocean can play a crucial role. In the United States, offshore wind has the potential to generate more electricity than our nation currently demands.¹¹

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AND

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THROUGH ACTIVITIES LIKE



TOURISM



RECREATION



FISHING

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Permanently protecting all federal waters from offshore drilling will help address the climate crisis and ensure the future of our clean coast economy.

We cannot afford to wait.

Recommendations:



President Biden should end new leasing for offshore drilling and direct the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to cancel all scheduled lease sales.



President Biden should prioritize responsible development of offshore wind to combat the climate crisis and support the long-term health of the ocean.



Congress should enact a permanent ban on all new leasing for offshore drilling.

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For Oceana's full methodology, analysis and references, please visit [Oceana.org/ClimateCrisis](https://oceana.org/ClimateCrisis)

