

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 28, 2020

The Honorable David Bernhardt
Secretary of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Re: New Offshore Oil and Gas Drilling Off California's Coast

Dear Secretary Bernhardt:

We write in response to reports that the Department of Interior will include new oil and gas leases off the California coast in a new Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program (Program). As Members of Congress from the California Delegation, we stand in strong opposition to expanded oil and gas drilling off the coast of California and urge you to remove these leases from consideration.

The inevitable onshore and offshore risks associated with offshore drilling impact public health, the environment, and our climate. For these reasons, every single coastal governor along the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, Republican and Democrat alike, has stood in opposition to offshore drilling. In coastal communities, where livelihoods are built around fishing, tourism, and recreation, it is critically important to guard against oil leaks or spills that could harm these ocean dependent economies and fragile marine ecosystems.

Because of the loud outcry from communities like these, President Donald Trump issued a ten-year moratorium on offshore drilling in waters off Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina in September—just three months ago.

We in California are all too familiar with the impacts of offshore oil drilling. The 1969 oil spill off the coast of Santa Barbara, California, at the time was the largest oil spill in the United States. This tragedy killed thousands of marine mammals, fish, and birds, and oil washed up on the beaches for hundreds of miles along Central and Southern California. There have been no new oil and gas leases in California State waters since this time, more than 50 years, and no federal leases off California for more than 35 years.

This year marks 10 years since BP's Deepwater Horizon oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico and offshore oil drilling is no safer today than it was then. We will continue to work in Congress to protect our coastal communities, ocean ecosystems, and fight global climate change. It is imperative that there is no new oil and gas leasing off California's Coast, and we demand the immediate withdrawal of new oil and gas leasing off California from consideration in any future Program.

Sincerely,



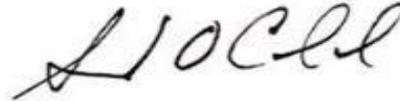
Alan Lowenthal (CA-47)
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman (CA-2)
Member of Congress



Mike Levin (CA-49)
Member of Congress



Salud Carbajal (CA-24)
Member of Congress

/s/
Mike Thompson (CA-5)
Member of Congress

/s/
Doris O. Matsui (CA-6)
Member of Congress

/s/
Ami Bera (CA-7)
Member of Congress

/s/
Jerry McNerney (CA-9)
Member of Congress

/s/
Mark DeSaulnier (CA-11)
Member of Congress

/s/
Barbara Lee (CA-13)
Member of Congress

/s/
Ro Khanna (CA-17)
Member of Congress

/s/
Anna G. Eshoo (CA-18)
Member of Congress

/s/
Jimmy Panetta (CA-20)
Member of Congress

/s/
Julia Brownley (CA-26)
Member of Congress

/s/
Adam B. Schiff (CA-28)
Member of Congress

/s/
Grace Napolitano (CA-32)
Member of Congress

/s/
Ted W. Lieu (CA-33)
Member of Congress

/s/
Jimmy Gomez (CA-34)
Member of Congress

/s/
Karen Bass (CA-37)
Member of Congress

/s/
Maxine Waters (CA-43)
Member of Congress

/s/
Nanette Diaz Barragán (CA-44)
Member of Congress

/s/
Juan Vargas (CA-51)
Member of Congress