



County of Monterey

Board of Supervisors

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Clerk of the Board
168 West Alisal St. 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901
831 755 5066
cob@co.monterey.ca.us

August 14, 2025

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

Re: Letter Opposing the Proposed 11th National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program

Dear Ms. Hammerle:

On behalf of the County of Monterey I am writing to express the County's strong opposition to the proposed 11th National Oil and Gas Leasing Program. In April of this year, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) announced a public comment period for its proposed 2029 National Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Leasing Program, which would allow for the sale of leases for oil and gas in federal waters off the California coast, and other states.

California has a long history of efforts to block offshore drilling dating back to 1969 when an oil rig off the coast of Santa Barbara leaked 3 million gallons of crude oil into the ocean, blanketing beaches with a thick layer of oil and killing thousands of marine mammals and birds. It was the largest oil spill in U.S. history until the Exxon Valdez spill 20 years later. After the 1969 Santa Barbara spill, California blocked all new offshore oil drilling in state waters, protecting our coastal waters up to three miles from the shore. The state reinforced that ban in 1994 by passing the California Coastal Sanctuary Act, which prohibited new leasing in state waters. Then in 2015 a pipeline servicing offshore oil platforms burst and fouled the same coastal areas affected by the 1969 oil spill.

Further, in October 2021, a ruptured pipeline from an existing oil well spilled more than 25,000 gallons of crude oil into the ocean and onto the beaches of Orange County. Despite numerous alarms, operators allowed oil to flow from the leak for over 14 hours. The spill covered more than 8,000 acres of the ocean's surface and required more than a week of cleanup while local businesses and fisheries suffered.

The County of Monterey has seen these devastating impacts to the California coast and has historically been concerned with this program, passing a 2018 resolution which supported a ban on new oil and gas drilling in federal waters offshore California. Today, the County is even more concerned with the suggestion that new lease sales for oil and gas exploration and drilling might include marine sanctuaries, such as the Channel Islands and Chumash Heritage sanctuaries.

On behalf of the County of Monterey, I urge you to oppose any oil and gas leasing off the California Central Coast and in other federal waters. The risk of an environmental or economic disaster is too great and does nothing to address growing concerns regarding the effects of climate change on our coastlines. We urge you to join with us and hundreds of thousands of citizens who are working to ensure the protection of our beautiful, valuable, and important ecological resources.

Sincerely,

DRAFT

Chris M. Lopez, Chair
Board of Supervisors



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cc: The Honorable Alex Padilla, U.S. Senator for California
The Honorable Adam Schiff, U.S. Senator for California
The Honorable Zoe Lofgren, 18th Congressional District
The Honorable Jimmy Panetta, 19th Congressional District