



Offshore Drilling

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Timeline of Offshore Drilling in *STATE* Waters

- Since 1953, there has been a distinction between *state* waters (within three miles of the shore) and *federal* waters (beyond three miles). Offshore oil drilling had been happening since 1896, but all in areas then considered to be controlled by the state.
- In 1969, further development of state waters came to an end. Since the Santa Barbara oil spill, the California State Lands Commission has denied all leases for new offshore oil development in state waters.
- In 1994, the state codified this regulatory ban on new leasing in state waters by enacting the California Coastal Sanctuary Act.
- In 2009, the State Lands Commission denied an application for “slant” drilling from Vandenberg Air Force Base that would have begun onshore but was intended to reach offshore oil in the Tranquillon Ridge field. Governor Schwarzenegger continued to press for legislative authorization, but dropped the issue in 2010 after the Deepwater Horizon disaster.
- Today, there are still nine platforms or artificial islands that remain in active production in *state* waters: two in the Santa Barbara Channel and seven in San Pedro Bay.

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Timeline of Offshore Drilling in *FEDERAL* Waters

- In 1963, the first lease sales were held for development in federal waters. Two lease sales were held for the *northern* and *central* regions of the California coast, leading to 19 exploratory wells but no commercial discoveries; no further lease sales were held.
- From 1963 to 1984, ten lease sales were held for the *southern* region, leading to more than 1,500 exploratory wells and many commercial discoveries.
- In the 1980s, many local governments began passing ordinances to ban the construction of onshore oil terminals or pipelines without a public vote. These restrict further develop of platforms in either state or federal waters.
 - These ordinances remain on the books in at least nine of the fifteen coastal counties: Santa Cruz, San Mateo, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, San Francisco, Sonoma, San Diego, Humboldt and Mendocino.
- From FY 1985 through FY 2008, Congressional appropriations bills included riders that blocked new offshore lease sales in the Atlantic or Pacific Oceans, apart from the Gulf of Mexico and Alaska.
- In 1990, as a second layer of protection, the first President Bush “withdrew” the Pacific region from new oil and gas leasing by executive order through 2000. In 1998, President Clinton extended this moratorium through 2012.
- In 2008, the second President Bush rescinded this executive order and proposed to allow drilling in the Pacific, similar to President Trump’s current proposal. In this same year, Congress dropped the riders that had been blocking offshore development from the FY 2009 appropriations bills.

- In 2009, President Obama carried forward parts of the Bush proposal, but only for new leases in the Atlantic. In 2010, after Deepwater Horizon, President Obama cancelled the one scheduled Atlantic lease sale.

- Today, there are still 43 active leases that remain in active production in *federal* waters off the coast of southern California.

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