



Defending the Pacific Ocean from Expanded Offshore Drilling

Pacific Waters on the Table for New Oil and Gas Leases

For decades, the Pacific coast has been closed to new offshore oil drilling. No new leases have been issued in federal waters since 1984 or in California state waters since 1969 – the year of the Santa Barbara oil spill. Longstanding congressional and presidential moratoriums, and the recently finalized 2017-2022 national oil and gas leasing plan, kept the U.S. Pacific off the table. That all changed when President Trump called for a re-evaluation of the federal 5-year plan through Executive Order 13795 – a directive issued on April 28, 2017 that puts invaluable ocean resources and coastal economies at risk from expanded drilling activities.¹ In the days leading up to the executive order, and when asked about potential oil leases off the Pacific coast, Department of Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke said “We’re going to look at everything.”²

Of the many threats facing oceans, one of them is entirely avoidable – offshore drilling. Leaks, spills and major accidents can happen at every stage of oil exploration, production and transportation. The 1969 Santa Barbara oil spill and 2015 Refugio Beach oil spill – combined with several leaks over the decades from offshore platforms and affiliated undersea pipelines – released more than four million gallons of oil into the Pacific Ocean.^{3,4,5,6,7} The 1969 and 2015 accidents alone impacted more than 90 miles^{8,9,10} of pristine coastline, affected at least 935 square miles^{11,12} of ocean, and caused economic losses from fishery closures and lost recreational opportunities.

#ProtectOurCoast



Photo left: Samples were taken to test fish for oil contamination at Refugio State Beach in 2015 © NOAA

Photo center: An oiled cormorant killed by the 2007 Cosco Busan oil spill ©Trish Carney/MarinePhotoBank

Photo right: A wall of bags contain oil removed from the Refugio Beach oil spill in 2015 © Oceana

What's at Risk: Coastal Economies and Marine Life

A healthy marine environment supports a \$56 billion West Coast ocean economy, contributing upwards of 500,000 jobs, providing nearly \$12 billion in wages, through recreation and tourism.¹³

The Pacific coast boasts a diversity of marine life that rivals any other place on the globe. Cold, nutrient-rich waters attract and support everything from tiny krill to huge whales, as well as some of the most lucrative fisheries in the nation. This global epicenter of ocean life includes 519 species of fish,¹⁴ nearly 150 species of seabirds,¹⁵ more than 30 species of marine mammals (whales, dolphins and seals),¹⁶ five species of sea turtles¹⁷ and more than 5,000 species of invertebrates.¹⁸ The Pacific coast draws millions of people annually – locals and tourists alike – seeking wildlife viewing, recreation and fishing, among other opportunities.

West Coast Opposition

West Coast Governors Jerry Brown (Calif.), Kate Brown (Ore.) and Jay Inslee (Wash.) have all voiced strong opposition to expanded oil and gas drilling in Pacific waters.¹⁹

A July 2017 poll conducted by the Public Policy Institute of California reveals the majority of Californians share the same sentiment for protecting the coastal environment. An overwhelming 69 percent of California residents oppose more oil drilling off their state's coast.²⁰ West Coast communities are already fighting back. In April 2017, the Los Angeles City Council passed an emergency resolution opposing the President's executive order. The cities of Santa Barbara and Cayucos also recently passed resolutions this summer opposing new drilling and fracking in existing offshore oil and gas wells off the California coast. Other cities in the state have committed to passing similar resolutions.



Take Action

The time to act is NOW. We must safeguard our beaches, living ocean resources, and coastal economies from the threat of expanded offshore oil and gas drilling.

Go to www.usa.oceana.org to learn how you can help **#ProtectOurCoast**.

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