

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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March 9, 2018

Ms. Kelly Hammerle
National Oil and Gas Leasing Program Development and Coordination Branch
Leasing Division
Office of Strategic Resources
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) (VAM-LD)
45600 Woodland Road
Sterling, Virginia 20166-9216

RE: Comments on the 2019-2024 Draft Proposed National Oil and Gas Leasing Program
(Docket ID: BOEM-2017-0074)

Dear Ms. Hammerle:

As stated in a February 7, 2018 letter from the Chair and a March 7, 2018 letter from the Executive Director of the California Coastal Commission (“Commission”), the Commission strongly opposes additional lease sales in California’s Outer Continental Shelf (“OCS”) planning areas and requests that California be removed from consideration for additional offshore oil and gas development in the 2019-2024 Proposed National Oil and Gas Leasing Program (“Proposed Program”). However, if California is included in the Proposed Program, the Commission submits the following scoping comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (“EIS”) that will accompany the Proposed Program.

In its role implementing California’s federally approved coastal management program, the Commission will conduct a federal consistency review to determine the consistency of any proposed lease sales, exploration, and production plans, and associated activities in federal waters with the enforceable policies of the California Coastal Act. Potential Coastal Act issues raised by the Proposed Program include: siting of hazardous industrial development; seismic and subsidence hazards; oil spills and release of other hazardous materials; water and air quality; greenhouse gas emissions; noise; visual impacts; recreation and public access; cultural resources; wetlands and other environmentally sensitive habitats; marine resources; and cumulative impacts. The Commission will rely in part on the information contained in the EIS in assessing the conformity of these activities with the Chapter 3 coastal resource protection policies.

To assist us in our review of proposed program elements, we request that the EIS specifically address the following:

1. General:

- a. **Cumulative Impacts:** The EIS should include analysis of the cumulative impacts associated with the maximum extent of oil and gas development from leasing of all planning areas included in the Draft Program. The EIS should also include an analysis

of the cumulative impacts associated with both proposed and existing oil and gas activities in the OCS.

- b. **Alternatives:** The EIS should include analysis of a full set of feasible alternatives for additional oil and gas development on the OCS, including, at a minimum, an alternative that excludes California from the 2019-2024 leasing program.
2. **Activities:** At a minimum, the EIS should analyze impacts associated with the following activities associated with offshore oil and gas development:
- a. Exploration
 - i. Seismic and other geophysical studies
 - ii. Drilling exploratory wells
 - iii. Onshore and offshore infrastructure needed to support exploration
 - b. Development
 - i. Construction of platforms, pipelines, onshore and offshore facilities for processing, refining, transportation or storage of oil and gas products
 - ii. Drilling of wells
 - iii. Other onshore or offshore infrastructure needed to support oil and gas development
 - c. Production
 - i. Operation and maintenance of wells, platforms, pipelines, processing and storage facilities, refining facilities
 - ii. Hydraulic fracturing
 - iii. Handling of waste and wastewater
 - iv. Transportation of crude and/or processed oil and gas to its final destination
 - d. Decommissioning
 - i. Plugging and abandonment of wells
 - ii. Removal of structures including platforms, pipelines and onshore processing or refining facilities
 - iii. Restoration of impacted areas
 - e. Oil spills
 - i. Catastrophic or large spills
 - ii. Small spills
 - iii. Clean-up activities
 - iv. Cumulative impacts
3. **Potentially Affected Coastal Resources:** At a minimum, the EIS should analyze potential impacts (temporary and permanent) to the following coastal resources:
- a. **Public Access and Recreation:**¹ The EIS should include an analysis of impacts to public access and recreation for visitors, businesses, and local and state governments including impacts related to:
 - i. Temporary or permanent loss of public access or recreation opportunities

¹ Articles 2 and 3 of the Coastal Act protect public access and recreation on California's coast. Section 30251 protects the scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas.

- ii. Traffic – onshore and offshore
- iii. Noise
- iv. Vibration
- v. Visual Landscape/Aesthetics
- b. Marine and coastal habitats and species:² At a minimum, the EIS should include an analysis of impacts to marine habitats and species related to:
 - i. Sensitive species, including federally and state listed species
 - ii. Loss and/or degradation of sensitive habitat (including, but not limited to intertidal or subtidal hard substrate, eelgrass beds, kelp forest, sand dollar beds, deepwater coral, Essential Fish Habitat, coastal wetlands and estuaries, beaches, dunes)
 - iii. Marine sanctuaries and other protected areas
 - iv. Ship strikes and other impacts associated with increased boat traffic
 - v. Oil Spills, including:
 - 1. Catastrophic spill (similar or larger than the 1969 Santa Barbara spill)
 - 2. Large spills (≥ 1000 barrels)
 - 3. Small spills (< 1000 barrels)
 - 4. Cumulative impacts from multiple spills at a time (i.e., due to a major seismic event) and cumulative impacts to areas that have experienced previous spills
 - vi. Noise (above and under the water surface)
 - vii. Lighting
 - viii. Vibration
 - ix. Water quality (i.e., impacts from routine discharges of produced water, drilling muds, sanitary wastes and other platform wastewater, turbidity, ship waste, etc.)
 - x. Air quality including greenhouse gas emissions
 - xi. Invasive species
 - xii. Erosion from terrestrial activities³
- c. Space-Use Conflicts
 - i. Offshore
 - 1. Renewable energy
 - 2. Commercial and recreational fishing⁴
 - 3. Recreation

² Sections 30230 and 30231 of the Coastal Act require that marine resources be maintained, enhanced and where feasible, restored and that the biological productivity and quality of coastal waters appropriate to maintain optimal populations of marine organisms and for the protection of human health be maintained and, where feasible, restored. Section 30240 of the Coastal Act protects environmentally sensitive habitat areas from any significant disruption of habitat values and requires development adjacent to environmentally sensitive areas to be sited and designed to prevent impacts to those areas. Section 30232 states that protection against the spillage of crude oil, gas, petroleum products or hazardous. Section 30233 defines the circumstances in which wetlands and open coastal waters can be filled, dredged, or diked.

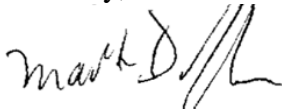
³ Section 30253 of the Coastal Act states that new development shall not create nor contribute significantly to erosion.

⁴ Sections 30234 and 30234.5 of the Coastal Act protect fishing activities and infrastructure.

4. Tribal and cultural uses⁵
5. Military
6. Shipping/commerce
7. Telecommunications
8. Aquaculture⁶
- ii. Onshore - conflicts with existing or planned land uses with onshore infrastructure needed to facilitate additional offshore oil and gas development
- d. Commercial and Recreational Fishing⁷
 - i. Exclusion
 - ii. Degraded water quality and fish/benthic habitat
 - iii. Additional boat traffic
- e. Hazards⁸
 - i. Erosion
 - ii. Subsidence
 - iii. Induced seismicity
 - iv. Risk of blowouts or other unplanned occurrences
- f. Tribal and Cultural Resources⁹: BOEM should conduct consultations with both federal and state-recognized tribes
- g. Environmental Justice¹⁰: The EIS should analyze to what extent additional offshore oil and gas development could disproportionately impact low-income communities or communities of color.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide these scoping comments on the draft EIS. We sincerely hope that BOEM defers to the wishes of our Governor and the united voice of California's resource agencies to remove California from the 2019-2024 Proposed Program. If BOEM does include California in the Proposed Program and the draft EIS, we again request that BOEM hold a series of public meetings, at least one in each region of our state, to allow the citizens of California an opportunity to express their views on expanded offshore oil and gas drilling off California's coast.

Sincerely,



(for) ALISON DETTMER
Deputy Director

⁵ Section 30244 of the Coastal Act protects archeological and paleontological resources.

⁶ Section 30222.5 of the Coastal Act protects oceanfront land suitable for aquaculture.

⁷ See footnote 4

⁸ See footnote 3

⁹ See footnote 5

¹⁰ Section 30013 of the Coastal Act requires the no person in the State of California shall be discriminated against or denied access to the protections and benefits of the Coastal Act on the basis of race, national origin, ethnic group identification, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, color, genetic information or disability.