

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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February 7, 2018

Kelly Hammerle
National Oil and Gas Leasing Program Development and Coordination Branch
Office of Strategic Resources - Leasing Division
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) (VAM-LD)
Sterling, VA 20166

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

Dear Ms. Hammerle:

In 1969, three million gallons of crude oil spilled off the coast of Santa Barbara, a tragedy that tarred miles of coastline, suffocated wildlife, galvanized the modern environmental movement and contributed to the creation of our agency. Since that time, the Coastal Commission has been dedicated to protecting and preserving the magnificent California coast. We were outraged to learn that BOEM had recklessly threatened the health of California's coastal environment and the future of its multi-trillion dollar economy by proposing to expand drilling off the coast. California depends on the international draw of its iconic beaches and ocean waters and it is the Coastal Commission's mandate to protect this fragile and precious natural resource.

Virtually all of California's coastal economy and valuable coastal resources would be at significant risk under this program. These dangers have not diminished since the devastating 1969 oil spill. Subsequent massive spills around the nation, such as the Exxon Valdez and Deepwater Horizon oil spills, and less massive but still significantly resource damaging 2015 Plains oil spill in Santa Barbara, are continued reminders of the inherent risks associated with offshore oil development.

While the Department of Interior appears to be sending mixed signals about whether (or at what point) Florida will be removed from the Program, due to its "unique" coastal tourism economy, California merits the same consideration as Secretary Zinke announced for Florida – removal from the Program. California's economy is roughly three times that of Florida, with over \$2 trillion of its \$2.35 trillion dollar gross domestic product derived from coastal counties, according to the National Ocean Economics Program. If offshore drilling poses a risk to Florida's economy, the risk to California's is three times greater.

We therefore join our California governor in urging you, in the strongest possible terms, to remove any proposed OCS oil and gas leasing off the California coast.

Sincerely,

Dayna Bochco
Chair, California Coastal Commission