

TOWN OF FAIRFAX

STAFF REPORT

February 7, 2018

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Michele Gardner, Town Clerk

SUBJECT: Authorize the Vice Mayor to prepare a letter opposing the removal of protections on oil drilling off the California Coast

RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the Vice Mayor to prepare the letter.

DISCUSSION

Vice Mayor Coler asked that this item be added to the agenda. She would like to prepare a letter on behalf of the Council opposing the removal of protections on oil drilling off the California Coast. The comment period closes on March 9, 2018. As background, the letter sent by the California congressional delegation to the U.S. Department of the Interior is attached.

FISCAL IMPACT

N/a

ATTACHMENT

Letter

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 18, 2018

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke:

As Members of the California congressional delegation, we write in strong opposition to the Department of the Interior's National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Draft Proposed Program (DPP) for 2019 to 2024 and its inclusion of lease sales in the Pacific. We urge you to immediately withdraw the DPP for 2019 to 2024.

On January 9, you announced that you would remove Florida's coasts from consideration in the 2019 to 2024 DPP. In doing so you noted that Florida's coasts "are highly reliant on tourism as an economic driver" and that you believed it was important to take into account "the local and state voice." Using that rationale, California must also be removed from the DPP, given the high level of local opposition and the reliance of California communities on tourism.

California coasts are highly reliant on tourism as an economic driver. In fact, California's ocean economy and the sector dependent on tourism and recreation are both larger than those of Florida. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, in 2014, the ocean economy contributed \$41.9 billion to California's gross domestic product, nearly half of which came from the tourism and recreation industries. California's ocean economy is unique and so important that in 2015 the federal government did an entire study showing the importance of it not just to California, but to our nation.

California and other states also cannot afford to allow expanded offshore drilling that will threaten the vitality of these industries. In 1969, we saw the Santa Barbara oil spill spew approximately 4.2 million gallons of oil into the ocean, devastating recreation, property, the fishing industry, and wildlife. If we open the Pacific to additional leases, it is not a question of if, but when the next disaster will occur.


You noted that your decision to exclude Florida was due in part to the concerns of Florida government officials. We agree that this decision must consider "local and state voices," but this sudden exemption to Florida, without any action to address the previous opposition from the state of California, makes a mockery of the requirements of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands


Act. Last week, the governors of California, Oregon and Washington again issued a statement expressing our states' firm opposition to the expansion of oil and gas leases in the Pacific. Additionally, dozens of Members of Congress from California, Oregon, and Washington sent you a letter in August 2017 conveying the same position. Under your rationale, California and other similarly situated states must also be exempted from the Five-Year Plan. Otherwise, this appears to be a purely politically-motivated decision.


Exempting only Florida from the DPP lacks rational basis and is arbitrary and capricious. It is unlikely that there exists a legal standard that would allow you to exempt Florida but not California under the rationale you already set forth and put in writing.


Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your timely response.


Sincerely,

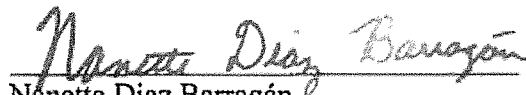

Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress

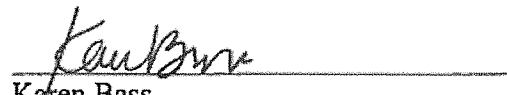

Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

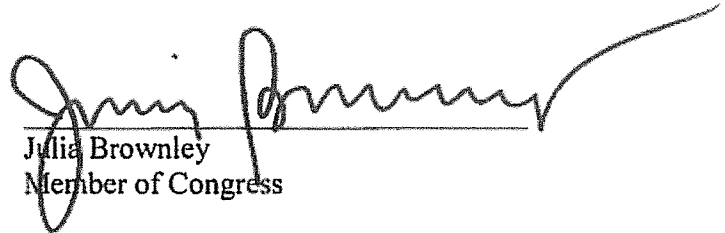

Salud O. Carbajal
Member of Congress



Pete Aguilar
Member of Congress

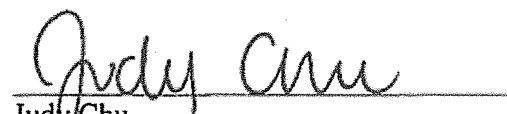

Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress


Karen Bass
Member of Congress


Ami Bera, M.D.
Member of Congress


Julia Brownley
Member of Congress


Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress


Judy Chu
Member of Congress



J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress



Susan Davis
Member of Congress



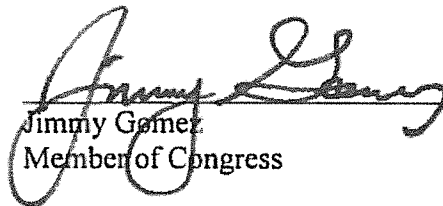
Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



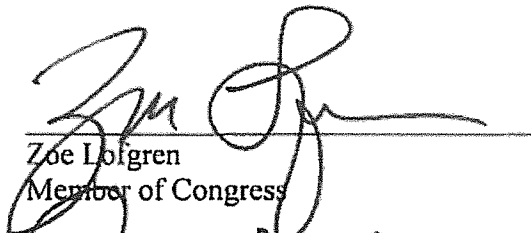
Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



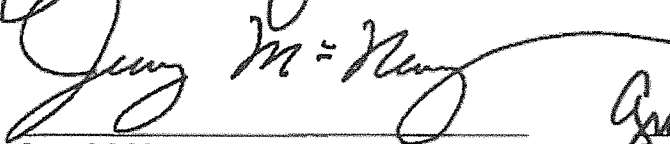
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



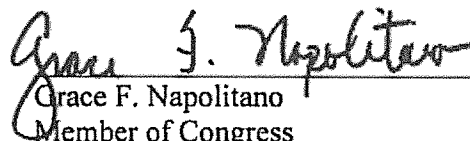
Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



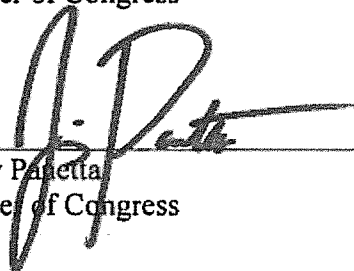
Doris Matsui
Member of Congress



Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress



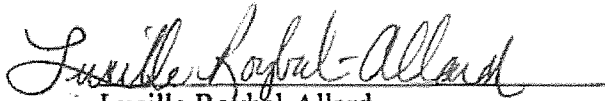
Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress




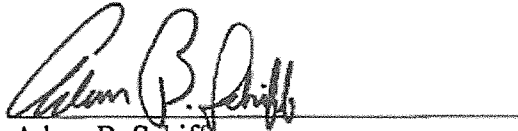
Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress

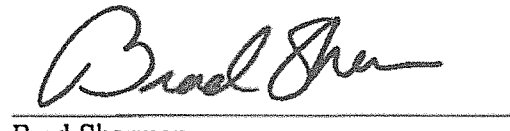


Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress

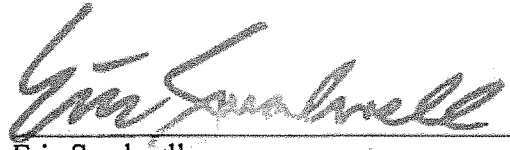

Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress


Brad Sherman
Member of Congress

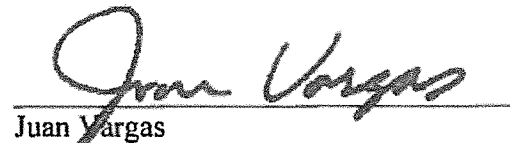

Jackie Speier
Member of Congress


Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress


Mark Takano
Member of Congress


Mike Thompson
Member of Congress


Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress


Juan Vargas
Member of Congress


Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress