

PRESS RELEASE

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Over 200 state legislators stand united against offshore oil drilling

Washington, D.C. - In response to the Trump Administration's announcement of increasing offshore oil and gas drilling, 227 members of the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators signed a letter to be delivered to U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke. The signatures represent legislators from 17 coastal states who oppose the draft oil and gas leasing program. The letter will be released and submitted at the BOEM hearing in Olympia, Washington today at 1:30 PST.

This leasing program seeks to make a majority of the United States Outer Continental Shelf open to oil and gas exploration and construction, representing the first time in decades that many states' coasts would be exposed to such development and potential harm.

The letter, spearheaded by Washington State Senator Kevin Ranker and California State Senator Kevin de León, cites numerous issues that come with offshore drilling. These issues range from the large-scale, irreparable damage caused by oil spills, to the long term damage to coastal economies after these disasters.

"This reckless proposal opens shorelines to new oil and gas drilling, putting Washington state and the entire country's economy and marine environment at risk of a catastrophic oil spill," said Ranker. "States across the country are standing up together against the Trump administration to protect our communities, our marine and coastal environment and economy."

"Californians overwhelmingly oppose offshore drilling," said de León. "It's dangerous, it's shortsighted, and the risks dramatically outweigh the benefits. We need to build the clean energy infrastructure of the future, not compromise our oceans and the coastal economies that depend on them with offshore oil wells."

Coastal tourism, fisheries, shipping, and defense are not only critical economic drivers in some states, but are the underpinning of all U.S. coastal states' economies. NOAA reports that coastal communities alone provide 45 percent of our nation's gross domestic product. Furthermore, California, Oregon, and Washington combined represent the fifth largest economy *in the world*, a level of prosperity that would not be achieved without their ocean-dependent industries. It is clear that U.S. coastlines are a fundamental part of the nation's economic activity and would be threatened by the offshore drilling plan.

“These state legislators are committed to protecting the coastlines of the United States, said Jeff Mauk, Executive Director of the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators. “They understand the economic and environmental importance of our coasts and are standing together against this proposal.”

Created by and for state legislators, the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that organizes over 1,000 environmentally-committed state legislators from all 50 states and both parties. NCEL provides venues and opportunities for lawmakers to share ideas and collaborate on environmental issues.

The full text of the letter is available [here](#).

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