



April 25, 2018

Hon. Lorena S. Gonzalez Fletcher, Chair
 Assembly Committee on Appropriations
 State Capitol, Room 2114
 Sacramento, California 95814

Re: AB 1775 (Offshore Oil and Gas Leasing) – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Gonzalez Fletcher and Committee Members:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we urge you to support AB 1775, which will prohibit the State Lands Commission from approving any new leases authorizing oil and gas related infrastructure within state waters that are associated with new federal offshore leases. This bill is necessary to protect

the California coast from the risks and impacts of new offshore oil and gas development, including development in federal waters that threatens our coastal communities, environment, and economy.

The U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's recent proposal to open the entire California coast to new federal offshore oil and gas leasing demonstrates the significance of this threat.¹ AB 1775 is consistent with Assembly Joint Resolution No. 29, which passed the Assembly and Senate with bipartisan support and resolved that the Legislature "strongly and unequivocally opposes the Trump administration's proposed leasing plan, which would expose the state to new offshore drilling..."² AB 1775 is necessary to communicate the State's resolve on this issue and to ensure protection of our coastal environment and economy.

The impacts from offshore oil and gas development are real and devastating. The 1969 blow-out at Platform A offshore Santa Barbara spilled more than four million gallons of crude oil that spread throughout hundreds of square miles of ocean and California coastline. The oil spill not only killed thousands of birds, fish, and sea mammals, but also had a ruinous impact on commercial fisheries, tourism, and coastal properties. More recently, the 2015 Refugio Oil Spill spread approximately 150 miles along the California coast from Gaviota to Redondo Beach, closed popular State Beach Parks and other public beaches, shut down commercial fishing grounds, and killed hundreds of marine mammals, seabirds, and other wildlife.

Offshore oil and gas development also poses a threat to California's vibrant coastal economy, which is heavily dependent on ocean resources. In 2016, California was the sixth largest economy in the world with a coastal economy that produced 2.2 trillion in GDP, which equates to 12% of the nation's total GDP.³ In 2012, ocean related tourism and recreation contributed \$17.6 billion to California's GDP, which grew to \$19.5 billion in 2016.^{4,5} From 2010 to 2016, California's coastal economy GDP grew at a faster rate than national economic growth, which was 19.53 percent and 11.72 percent, respectively.⁶ Fishing is also an important economic driver for the state. Recreational fishing contributing over \$1 billion to the California's GDP in 2012.⁷ California's living marine resources (commercial fishing, fish hatcheries, aquaculture, seafood processing, and markets) contributed approximately \$448 million⁸ and 122,000 jobs in 2011.⁹

The State of California is committed to protecting our precious coast from the harmful impacts of offshore oil development. In 1994, the State Legislature passed AB 2444 (California Coastal Sanctuary Act), prohibiting new leasing in state waters. The Governor, State Lands Commission, and California Coastal Commission have consistently opposed federal offshore oil leasing. In 1999, the State joined several NGOs in filing a lawsuit that resulted in the termination of forty undeveloped federal oil leases off

¹ *Notice of Availability of the 2019-2024 Draft Proposed Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program and Notice of Intent To Prepare a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement*, Federal Register Volume 83, Number 5, Pages 829-834 (January 8, 2018).

² AJR-29 Oil and gas: offshore drilling: operations: leases. Passed February 8, 2018, 56-9.

³ Letter from California State Lands Commission to Kelly Hammerle, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management National Program Director (Feb 7, 2018).

⁴ <http://centerfortheblueeconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/CALIFORNIA-OCEAN-AND-COASTAL-ECONOMIES.3.4.15.pdf>.

⁵ http://www.slc.ca.gov/About/News_Room/2018/02-07-18/Hammerle_Kelly_OCSOilandGasLeasing_FINAL_2-7-2018.pdf.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ NOAA Office for Coastal Management. 2011. The national significance of California's ocean economy. Available at: <https://coast.noaa.gov/data/digitalcoast/pdf/california-ocean-economy.pdf>

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ NOAA Office of Science and Technology. 2011. Fisheries economics of the United States. Report available at: https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/economics/publications/feus/fisheries_economics_2011

our coast. *State of California v. Norton*, 311 F.3d 1162 (9th Cir. 2002). Since then, California has emerged as a global leader in the fight against climate change by passing several laws promoting reliance on clean energy sources and requiring reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Please protect the California coast from new offshore oil drilling. Please vote “Yes” on AB 1775.

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NextGen California

Quentin Foster, Program Director, California
Environmental Defense Fund

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Santa Barbara Channelkeeper

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Bruce Reznik, Executive Director
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Dianne Cohen, Chief Executive Officer
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Jackie Nuñez, Founder
The Last Plastic Straw

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Ken Hough, Executive Director
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