

Staff Report 50

PROPOSED ACTION:

Consider supporting the West Coast Ocean Protection Act by Senator Feinstein and the California Clean Coast Act by Representative Carbajal, legislation that would ban new offshore oil and gas leasing on the Outer Continental Shelf off the coast of California, Oregon, and Washington, and consider supporting the American Coasts and Oceans Protection Act introduced by Representative Levine that would ban new offshore oil and gas leasing in federal waters offshore Southern California.

PROPOSED LEGISLATION:

The West Coast Ocean Protection Act by Senator Feinstein and the California Clean Coast Act by Representative Carbajal would ban new offshore oil and gas leasing on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) off the coast of California, Oregon, and Washington. The American Coasts and Oceans Protection Act by Representative Levine would ban new oil and gas leasing in the Southern California planning area.

The Commission has exclusive jurisdiction over all ungranted tide and submerged lands owned by the state, and the beds of navigable rivers, streams, lakes, bays, estuaries, inlets, and straits. The Commission has exclusive jurisdiction over leasing on tide and submerged lands for pipeline and utility rights-of-way that serve the OCS, and has jurisdiction over marine oil terminals that serve OCS operations. The Commission provides the people of California with effective stewardship of the lands, waterways, and resources entrusted to its care based on the principles of equity, sustainability, and resiliency, through preservation, restoration, enhancement, responsible economic development, and the promotion of public access. The Commission has exercised its stewardship by supporting a ban on new offshore oil and gas leasing in federal waters off the coast of California, Oregon, and Washington for decades. Staff recommends that the Commission adopt a support position on these new bills to reinforce its commitment to transitioning to a clean energy future and to re-express its opposition to offshore oil and gas development in federal waters.

The California Coastal Sanctuary Act bans new oil and gas leasing in State waters. California has not issued a lease for offshore oil or gas development since 1968. Further oil and gas development on the OCS is unnecessary and is incompatible with the State's energy policies, transitioning energy markets, and vision for the future. The Commission has adopted numerous resolutions in past years opposing the resumption or expansion of oil and gas development in the Pacific OCS area. The resolutions convey the Commission's view that additional offshore oil and gas leasing and development threatens the environment and the economy, prevents the nation from reducing its dependency on fossil fuels, contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, and adversely affects tourism and fisheries.

The catastrophic harm from an offshore oil spill is well established and universally acknowledged. Even with the newest technology and best safety precautions, the risk is unacceptably high. In the 1969 oil spill in Santa Barbara County, staggering environmental and economic damage ensued. Nearby communities were devastated economically and environmentally. This catastrophe, from an oil and gas lease in the Pacific OCS, resulted in the death of nearly 4,000 birds, and many marine mammals, including sea lions and elephant seals; suspension of commercial fishing; and a decline in tourism. The Deepwater Horizon spill in 2010 exposed the full force of an oil spill and the devastating effect on people, the ocean, and the coastal communities and their economies that sustained the impacts from the spill.

As a State, California has perhaps the highest risk from an oil spill and the most to lose. What distinguishes California is that it is the sixth largest economy in the world. California is home to two of the largest ports in the nation, the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, which are a commercial gateway for the entire United States. California's coastline supports commerce, tourism, recreation, fishing, navigation, marine transportation, public access, and abundant marine life. California's marine transportation and commerce and coastal tourism and recreation support economies across the country. A thematic characteristic of California's economic drivers that contribute to the United States economy is that they are concentrated along the coastline.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

It is recommended that the Commission:

Support the West Coast Ocean Protection Act by Senator Feinstein and the California Clean Coast Act by Representative Carbajal, legislation that would permanently ban new offshore oil and gas leasing on the outer continental shelf off the coast of California, Oregon, and Washington, and support the American

Coasts and Oceans Protection Act introduced by Representative Levine that would ban new oil and gas leasing in federal waters offshore Southern California.