

From the desk of Armi Robb

Organizations

Surfrider Foundation – Newport,
Coos Bay, Siuslaw and Portland
Chapters
Oregon Coastal Zone Management
Association
Forever Wild Seafood
Environment Oregon
Sierra Club Oregon Chapter
Center for Biological Diversity
Oregon Coast Alliance
Oceana
Oregon League of Conservation
Voters
Oregon League of Women Voters
Oregon Environmental Council
Oregon Shores Conservation
Coalition
Oregon Wild
Oregon Environmental Council
Whale and Dolphin Conservation
Native Fish Society
Beyond Toxics
Climate Solutions
Oregon Physicians for Social
Responsibility
Sea Lion Defense Brigade
Audubon Society – Lincoln City,
Kalmiopsis, Portland, Corvallis,
Rogue Valley, Salem

Businesses

Over 100 coastal businesses dependent
on Oregon's healthy coast have signed
on (full list available upon request)

Pacific Ocean Harvester
Sporthaven Marina
Port Orford Sustainable Seafood
Drift Inn
Northwest EcoTours
Local Ocean
Ocean Pulse

January 28, 2019

Members of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Senator Dembrow and Honorable Members:

We are writing in support of Senate Bill 256, which would prohibit oil and gas drilling activities in the Oregon Territorial Sea and would prohibit the Department of State Lands from furthering offshore oil and gas drilling activities in adjacent federal ocean waters. Drilling for oil and gas off Oregon would pose a substantial threat to the health of Oregon's nearshore marine ecosystem, marine wildlife and coastal and estuarine habitats. Possible oil contamination through spills and seeps risks severe economic and cultural loss to coastal communities, including losses in tourism, recreational and commercial fishing, and many other beach and ocean recreation opportunities enjoyed by Oregonians and visitors to the state. Further, offshore drilling and exploration perpetuates our ties to greenhouse gas pollution and contributes to climate change impacts on our coast such as ocean acidification, sea level rise, extreme weather, storm surge and coastal erosion. Rather than risk severe and long-standing economic and environmental loss for a limited short-term economic gain, we support a moratorium on offshore oil and gas drilling off the Oregon coast.

The Pacific Ocean off Oregon is one of the richest temperate marine ecosystems of the world. Thousands of gray whales migrate through coastal waters and 14 species of seabirds nest and breed on Oregon's coastal rocks and cliffs. Oregon's ocean waters support a wide diversity of fish and invertebrates such as salmon, rockfishes and Dungeness crab. These species are not only ecologically important and sensitive, but are important to the people of Oregon for economic, social and cultural purposes. Oil and gas drilling off Oregon would put all of this at risk, including tens of thousands of Oregon jobs and roughly \$2 billion in gross domestic product generated by the fishing, tourism and recreational sectors.¹

Catastrophic spills like the Exxon Valdez, and blowouts like the Deepwater Horizon² are not the only threat oil and gas operations would pose to the Oregon coast. Offshore drilling operations create various forms of pollution including drilling muds, brine waters, deck runoff water, and flowline and pipeline leaks.³ Offshore rigs can dump tons of drilling fluid and metal cuttings into the ocean, including toxic metals such as lead, chromium and mercury, and carcinogens such as benzene.⁴ Such threats associated with spills cannot be contained along Oregon's rugged coast, thus putting our healthy coastal fisheries and ecosystems at an extreme risk.

(Endnotes on reverse)

Marine Discovery Tours
Lincoln City Surf Shop
Seaside Surf Shop
Clemente's Seafood
Bay Street Grille
WildSpring Guest Habitat
Beach House Vacation Rentals
Mo's Seafood and Chowder
Sacred Sea Tuna
FV San Pablo
Cleanline Surf Shp
Moment Surf Co.
Ossie's Surf Shop
South Coast Tours
Redfish
Betty Kay Charters
Ra'tel Motel
Windmere West Coast Properties

Given these risks to Oregon's marine ecosystems and our coastal economy it is clear legislation to prohibit offshore oil and gas exploration and development off our coast is the right decision. Such legislation would further Oregon's current moratorium on drilling, set to expire January 2, 2020, and Executive Order 18-28, which directs state agencies to protect Oregon's coastal economy and diverse ecosystems by preventing activities associated with offshore oil and gas drilling. SB 256 is also responsive to the many Oregon citizens, elected officials, communities, Ports and fishery managers who have voiced opposition to offshore oil and gas drilling - well over a dozen cities, ports and tribes collectively have passed formal resolutions in opposition to drilling along Oregon's coast.

Thank you for your time and leadership on this important matter.

For further information, please contact:

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¹ Office for Coastal Management, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). (2014) Economics: National Ocean Watch. Available: <https://www.coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/data/enow.html> and Office for Coastal Management, NOAA (2017) NOAA Report on the U.S. Ocean and Great Lakes Economy. Available: <https://coast.noaa.gov/data/digitalcoast/pdf/econ-report.pdf>

² See infographic of largest oil spills affecting U.S. ocean waters at: <https://response.restoration.noaa.gov/oil-and-chemical-spills/oil-spills/largest-oil-spills-affecting-us-waters-1969.html>

³ Veile, J.A. et al. 2004. A White Paper Describing Produced Water from Production of Crude Oil, Natural Gas, and Coal Bed Methane, Prepared for: U.S. Department of Energy, National Energy Technology Laboratory.

⁴ Ibid.