



Good for the Economy.
Good for the Environment.



SURF INDUSTRY
Members Association

June 16, 2022
The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

We represent thousands of coastal businesses and entrepreneurs that generate billions of dollars in annual economic activity throughout the country. Our members understand that offshore oil drilling anywhere presents significant economic risk everywhere, and we are calling on you to release a five-year plan for the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) that schedules no new lease sales for oil and gas activities.

The offshore oil and gas leasing program has a direct impact on the thousands of business owners and hundreds of thousands of jobs that power our coastal economy. Healthy coasts are the lifeblood of our economy and the backbone of countless small businesses that depend on ocean tourism for steady revenue. Our businesses rely on a clean ocean to facilitate sustainable economic activity in hotels, restaurants, recreation, real estate, fishing, and so much more. In fact, America's clean coastal economy supports around 3.3 million American jobs and \$250 billion in GDP.¹ Activities such as tourism, recreation, and fishing make our communities vibrant and prosperous, but they must be protected from toxic oil spills and increasingly dangerous climate disasters.

Year after year, the oil and gas industry tell us that they are committed to safety and preventing oil spill disasters, yet disasters continue to occur. The oil and gas industry has failed to protect us from their dangerous practices. Communities in the Gulf of Mexico are still struggling with the impacts of the BP *Deepwater Horizon* disaster, and Southern California shut down some of its busiest beaches and fisheries last year due to a toxic oil spill. The threat offshore drilling poses to our communities is a risk our economies cannot afford, and it is time to end this practice once and for all and protect our coasts.

The BP *Deepwater Horizon* disaster made it clear: Oil spills do not respect state boundaries. When the rig exploded off the coast of Louisiana, hundreds of miles away from Florida's coast, Floridians were told not to worry. But tar balls soon washed up on their shores, followed up by a flood of cancelled reservations and temporarily closed storefronts. The *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill cost

¹ Oceana (Jan. 2021) Offshore Drilling Fuels the Climate Crisis and Threatens the Economy. Washington, D.C. Available: https://usa.oceana.org/sites/default/files/2021/01/27/final_climate_economy_fact_sheet_m1_doi.pdf.

the recreation industry more than \$500 million and more than 10 million user-days of beach, fishing, and boating activity.² Following the disaster, fisheries closed and demand for Gulf seafood plummeted, costing the seafood industry nearly \$1 billion. And the impacts hit housing markets across the region as a decline in prices between 4% and 8% lasted for at least five years.³

As rigs continue to expand further offshore into deeper waters, the dangers of drilling and the likelihood of another disaster increase.⁴ Despite this, the oil and gas industry is still pushing to expand its footprint. This threatens businesses up and down all coasts. When they drill, they spill, and coastal economies will inevitably bear the burden of resulting beach closures, economic shutdowns, and job losses.

We commend the administration's commitment to addressing the climate crisis. The administration must now act on climate by protecting our coasts and closing the chapter on any new oil and gas leasing. By advancing clean, renewable energy, we can support American energy independence and create good-paying jobs without risking our climate.

Our businesses are facing the impacts of warming oceans, rising seas, and increasingly disastrous weather patterns head on. In 2021 alone, the U.S. experienced 20 separate billion-dollar weather and climate disasters, and in total natural disasters caused \$145 billion in damages last year.⁵ Quite simply, we cannot afford to continue drilling. Permanently protecting federal waters from drilling will prevent over 19 billion tons of greenhouse gas emissions—the equivalent of taking every car in the nation off the road for 15 years. It would also prevent over \$720 billion in damages to people, property, and the environment, letting our businesses prosper long into the future.⁶ Ending new offshore drilling will help our nation address the climate emergency while protecting coastal communities and millions of jobs.

The oil and gas industry has already stockpiled millions of acres of leases on public lands and waters. Ending all new leasing would not end offshore production on current leases, nor would it prevent future production on the over 8 million acres of unused leases that have already been approved.⁷

As you prepare the Proposed Program for new offshore drilling leases, we urge you to uphold your campaign promise to end new offshore oil and gas leasing. Ending new leasing for offshore drilling will protect the millions of jobs that rely on a healthy ocean, and it is a vital step in tackling the climate crisis.

² NOAA Assessing the Impacts from Deepwater Horizon. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration | US Department of Commerce. Available: <https://response.restoration.noaa.gov/about/media/assessing-impacts-deepwater-horizon.html>.

³ Cano-Urbina J, Clapp CM and Willardson K (2019) The effects of the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill on housing markets. *Journal of Housing Economics* 43: 131–156. doi: 10.1016/j.jhe.2018.09.004

⁴ National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon and Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling (2011) *Deep Water: The Gulf oil disaster and the future of offshore drilling*. Report to the President. Washington, D.C.

⁵ Smith, A. (Jan. 2022) 2021 U.S. billion-dollar weather and climate disasters in historical context. *Climate.gov*. Available: [https://www.climate.gov/news-features/blogs/beyond-data/2021-us-billion-dollar-weather-and-climate-disasters-historical#:~:text=Damages%20from%20the%202021%20disasters,Western%20wildfires%20\(%2410.9%20billion\)](https://www.climate.gov/news-features/blogs/beyond-data/2021-us-billion-dollar-weather-and-climate-disasters-historical#:~:text=Damages%20from%20the%202021%20disasters,Western%20wildfires%20(%2410.9%20billion)). 1

⁶ Oceana (Jan. 2021) *Offshore Drilling Fuels the Climate Crisis and Threatens the Economy*. https://usa.oceana.org/sites/default/files/2021/01/27/final_climate_economy_fact_sheet_m1_doi.pdf.

⁷ BOEM (March 2022) *Combined Leasing Report*. Available: <https://www.boem.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Lease%20stats%203-1-22.pdf>

Sincerely,

Grant Bixby, Advisory Council - Business Alliance for Protecting the Pacific Coast

Vipe Desai, Executive Director - Surf Industry Members Association

Bob Keefe, Executive Director - Environmental Entrepreneurs

Thomas Kies, President - Business Alliance for Protecting the Atlantic Coast

Robin Miller, Chair - Florida Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce

cc:

The Honorable Deb Haaland, Secretary of the Interior

The Honorable Gina McCarthy, Assistant to the President and National Climate Advisor

The Honorable Brenda Mallory, Chair, Council on Environmental Quality

The Honorable Tommy Beaudreau, Deputy Secretary of the Interior

Ms. Amanda Lefton, Director, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

Mr. Ali Zaidi, Deputy National Climate Advisor, The White House

Ms. Laura Daniel-Davis, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Interior