



City of Encinitas City Council's Office

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January 22, 2026

Bruce Ehlers
Mayor

Ms. Kelly Hammerle, Program Manager
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
4560 Woodland Road
Sterling, VA 20166-9216

**RE: OPPOSITION TO THE PROPOSED 11th NATIONAL OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF OIL AND GAS LEASING DRAFT PROPOSED PROGRAM
DOCKET ID: BOEM-2025-0483**

Jim O'Hara
Deputy Mayor

Dear Ms. Hammerle,

The City of Encinitas respectfully submits this comment letter in strong opposition to the proposed 11th National Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil & Gas Leasing Draft Proposed Program (Proposed Program).

Joy Lyndes
Council Member

The Proposed Program considers up to 34 potential offshore lease sales in 21 of the 27 OCS planning areas, which includes up to six along the Pacific Coast. This includes the Southern California planning area where leases are proposed to occur in 2027, 2029 and 2030. Please consider the following reasons why the Southern California draft proposed program area should be excluded from the final 2026-2031 planning areas.

Maro San Antonio
Council Member

State and City Climate Commitments:

The City recognizes the federal government's efforts to address national energy needs; however, expanding offshore oil and gas leasing along California's coastline is contrary to the public interest. Past oil spills have caused significant environmental and economic harm to coastal communities, including major incidents in 1969 and 2015.

Luke Shaffer
Council Member

California has enacted some of the nation's strongest climate and clean-energy laws, including greenhouse gas reduction targets and a commitment to carbon neutrality. Similarly, the City of Encinitas has adopted policies to reduce emissions, advance renewable energy, and implement climate adaptation strategies through its General Plan – Resource Management Element (RME) and Climate Action Plan (CAP), which include:

Jennifer Campbell
City Manager

- RME Policy 2.4: The City shall prohibit support facilities in the City for offshore exploration of oil or drilling of oil in coastal waters within its jurisdiction and strongly discourage such activity in any coastal waters in San Diego; and
- CAP Strategy 2: Renewable Energy Transition away from the use of fossil fuels to renewable energy sources to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

It is imperative to note that since 1988, which was 38 years ago, the City's adopted General Plan has opposed offshore oil drilling, and that opposition remains a high priority to the City today.

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Longstanding Opposition to Pacific OCS Leasing:

For decades, there have been no new offshore lease sales in the Pacific Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) planning areas, reflecting consistent bipartisan opposition at the federal, state, and local levels. The City of Encinitas has previously submitted comments opposing the inclusion of California's coastline in offshore leasing programs during prior federal planning cycles. Our position remains unequivocal: we strongly oppose any new or expanded offshore oil and gas leasing off California's coast.

Coastal Ecosystems Threats and Economic Implications:

Allowing the Proposed Program could directly threaten economic vitality of the entire City. Encinitas residents and visitors cherish our beaches for recreation, exploration, relaxation, education, and tourism—activities that directly support the local economy. What is not cherished are tarballs on our beach wreaking havoc to beachgoer's feet and towels. That is a reality that our community has not forgotten from the oil spills in the 1980's-1990's. We value our ocean waters and iconic coastline, which provide critical habitat for marine mammals, birds, and fish. From the City's perspective, the environmental and economic risks of allowing additional offshore drilling leases outweigh the minimal contribution Pacific production currently makes to the national energy supply. The Proposed Program would open the door to the increased likelihood of oil spills. It also reinforces dependence on fossil fuels, undermining efforts by the State and City to promote a greener, more sustainable future through alternative energy sources that protect natural resources and improve air quality.

No Demonstrated Need for the Proposed Program:

The Proposed Program would restart the leasing schedule despite an existing 5-year program (2024–2029) that does not permit Southern California offshore drilling. It would replace or override parts of the current schedule, making it premature, redundant, and undermining progress under the 10th Program, which limited lease sales and excluded the Pacific Coast. There is no demonstrated need for expanded leasing, particularly off California's coast.

For these reasons, the City of Encinitas strongly opposes the proposed 11th National Outer Continental Shelf Oil & Gas Leasing Draft Proposed Program and requests that the Southern California draft proposed program area is excluded from the final 2026-2031 planning areas, thereby maintaining and strengthening existing protections that have prevented new offshore oil and gas lease sales along the California coast.

Sincerely,



Bruce Ehlers, Mayor
City of Encinitas

cc: Congressman Mike Levin
Senator Alex Padilla
Senator Adam Schiff
Matthew Giacona, Acting Director, U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
Catherine Hill, League of California Cities