

## PROTECTING OUR COASTLINES THERE IS A BETTER WAY



Whether just a few miles from the beaches where families swim, fish, and play, or just over the horizon, offshore oil and gas drilling poses a serious threat to America's coasts.

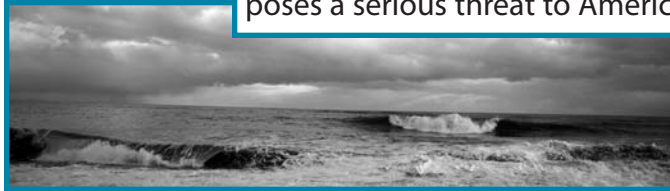


Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

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## PROTECTING OUR COASTLINES THERE IS A BETTER WAY

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Whether just a few miles from the beaches where families swim, fish, and play, or just over the horizon, offshore oil and gas drilling poses serious threats to America's coasts. From Georges Bank to Virginia Beach, from the Outer Banks of North Carolina to the Florida Keys and up and down the spectacular Pacific coast, these beloved beaches and coastal waters are threatened by proposals to lift the ban on new offshore oil and gas drilling. These shorelines are the vacation destinations for millions of Americans each year and the economic lifeline for coastal communities fueled by tourism and commercial and recreational fishing. Are we to hand over our coasts to oil and gas interests and run the risk of spoiled beaches and ruined economies?

**The offshore drilling moratorium preventing new offshore oil and gas drilling has enjoyed strong, bipartisan support for 25 years, and now is the time to strengthen, not erase, these protections.**

### COASTLINES AT RISK



With the help of powerful Congressional allies, pro-drilling forces are aggressively pushing bills that would undermine the moratorium that currently protects our coasts. Those who seek to over turn the moratorium have vowed to renew their efforts this year, and as expected we have already seen a wave of congressional and administrative attacks that attempt to weaken coastal protections or lift the offshore drilling moratorium altogether. The various bills introduced this year alone seek to open millions of acres in the eastern Gulf of Mexico to drilling and coerce coastal states to accept more offshore drilling closer to shore with fiscal incentives.

The Minerals Management Service (MMS), the agency within the Department of the Interior that oversees oil and gas drilling in federal offshore waters, released a new Five-Year Leasing Plan that would open vast areas off our coasts to oil and gas drilling. This plan would open up for the first time about two million acres in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico and prepare for leasing areas off Virginia's coast and in Alaska's famous salmon fishing grounds in Bristol Bay. For 25 years drilling in these areas has been banned by both Congressional moratoria and Presidential deferral orders.

The Sierra Club strongly supports permanent protection for our beaches and coastal waters. In Congress, the offshore moratorium has enjoyed strong bipartisan support throughout its 25-year existence. The push to drill off America's coasts has met with failure in virtually every case because overwhelming numbers of citizens, business interests, and legislators have been firm in their resolve to protect our fragile coasts and coastal economies. But drillers keep banging on the door.



# DON'T SACRIFICE OUR FRAGILE COASTS



Favorite destinations, such as North Carolina's Outer Banks, Virginia Beach, and Florida's Gulf Coast are threatened by proposed offshore oil and gas drilling, putting local wildlife, ecosystems, recreational opportunities, and economies at risk. In addition to the perils of oil drilling with its attendant leaks and spills, offshore natural gas drilling would have substantial environmental impacts on America's coasts and marine life, including the following:

**Onshore damage:** The onshore network of access roads, pipelines, and docks to facilities, buildings, and other infrastructure associated with offshore drilling causes significant harm to our fragile coasts. For example, pipelines crossing coastal wetlands in the Gulf of Mexico are estimated to have destroyed more coastal salt marsh than can be found in the stretch of coastal land running from New Jersey through Maine.



**Water pollution:** Gas and oil drilling operations pollute our coasts with excessive amounts of waste and debris. This waste often contains toxins such as lead and mercury. Other pollutants, such as benzene, arsenic, zinc, and some radioactive materials are routinely released during drilling.

**Air pollution:** Offshore natural gas drilling causes a significant amount of air pollution. An average exploration well for oil or gas generates some 50 tons of nitrogen oxides (NOx), 13 tons of carbon monoxide, 6 tons of sulfur dioxide, and 5 tons of volatile organic hydrocarbons.

## Smart Energy Solutions...

Whether it's the polluting energy bill passed by Congress and signed by President Bush in 2005, legislation championed by reckless state legislatures, manipulation of high gas and home heating prices, or the shameless exploitation of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the oil and gas industry and their allies at all levels of government have America's coasts square in their sights. Instead of drilling off our coasts, America needs real energy solutions like energy efficiency, renewable resources like solar power, and polices that will help ensure our children are free from air and water pollution and that our coastal economies are protected.

**For more information, updates, and suggestions on how you can help protect America's coasts and marine environments please visit:**  
[www.sierraclub.org/coasts](http://www.sierraclub.org/coasts)

Dear Representative \_\_\_\_\_:

Our coasts belong to all Americans and should be protected as the national treasure that they are. America's coasts will not be free from destructive drilling until permanent protections are in place. The offshore drilling moratorium has enjoyed strong, bipartisan support for 25 years, and now is the time to strengthen, not erase, these protections.

No matter how much of our natural heritage we sacrifice, we can't drill our way to energy independence. We can only achieve energy freedom for our nation by promoting energy efficiency, renewable energy, and making cars go farther on a gallon of gas. We need an honest, balanced energy plan that gives us cleaner, cheaper, and safer energy solutions that preserves our coastlines and marine environments. By investing in real energy solutions, we can protect our coastal resources and our coastal economies.

Whether the coastlines are part of a national park, a favorite beach, or an ocean town community, our coasts deserve to be protected and saved for the enjoyment of future generations. The best way to protect our coasts is by maintaining our 25-year old OCS moratorium.

Sincerely, \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Sierra Club Legislative Office, 408 C Street NE, Washington, DC 20002

Dear Minerals Management Service:

America's coasts and marine environments provide essential habitat for fish and wildlife, a destination for thousands of vacationing families each year, and the economic lifeblood for thousands of tourism and fishing communities. The Minerals Management Service (MMS) should protect our marine waters, shorelines, and coastal economies.

The new MMS offshore drilling plan presumes that Congress is willing to lift the legislative moratorium that has long protected the mid-Atlantic coast, and assumes that President Bush will also be willing to rescind prematurely the 1991 Presidential withdrawals first put in place by his father, former President George Herbert Walker Bush.

I oppose the plan to open up 2 million acres in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico and prepare for leasing areas off Virginia's coast and in Alaska's famous salmon fishing grounds in Bristol Bay. Instead of drilling off our coasts, America needs real energy solutions like energy efficiency, renewable resources like solar power, and polices that will help ensure our children are free from air and water pollution and that our coastal economies are protected.

Sincerely, \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Sierra Club Legislative Office, 408 C Street NE, Washington, DC 20002

Please place first class postage here

Representative \_\_\_\_\_

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

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