

## Organizations

Audubon Society of Portland  
Berkley Conservation Institute  
Ecola Creek Watershed Council  
Environment Oregon  
Northwest Guides and Anglers  
Association  
Northwest Sportfishing Industry  
Association  
Oregon Albacore Commission  
Oregon Dungeness Crab  
Commission  
Oregon League of Conservation  
Voters  
Oregon Salmon Commission  
Oregon Trawl Commission  
Oceana  
Oregon Shores Conservation  
Coalition  
Port Orford Ocean Resource Team  
Southern Oregon Ocean Resources  
Council (SOORC)  
Surfrider Foundation

## Businesses & Individuals

Aquatic Healing Arts  
Central Coast Water Sports  
Forks Farm Flowers  
Gray's Web Design  
Jupiter's Books  
OAESYS Corporation  
Ocean Haven Motel  
Ocean Pulse Surf Shop  
Raincoast Ecosystems  
Bob Rees, The Guide's Forecast  
See Vue Motel  
Tactics Board Shop  
Terry Thompson, Lincoln County  
Commissioner  
Chris Vertopoulos, Oregon Fishing  
Guide

January 13, 2010

Members of the House Environment and Water Committee  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Representative Cannon and Honorable Members:

We are writing in support of HB 3613, which would reinstate Oregon's ban on offshore oil and gas drilling. 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. What is more, possible oil contamination through spills and seeps risks severe economic and cultural loss to coastal communities, including losses in tourism, recreational and commercial fishing, surfing, and many other opportunities enjoyed by Oregonians and visitors to the state. Rather than risk severe and long-standing economic and environmental loss for a limited short-term economic gain, we support a ban 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. Oregon's diverse coastal economy generates approximately 5.4 billion dollars in personal income,<sup>i</sup> including valuable commercial fishing, aquaculture, tourism and recreational sectors that would be at risk if offshore oil drilling were allowed in Oregon's Territorial Sea.<sup>ii</sup>

Catastrophic spills like the *Prestige* or the *Exxon Valdez*,<sup>iii</sup> and blowouts like the recent Montara platform off North Western Australia<sup>iii</sup> 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.<sup>iv</sup> 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.<sup>vvi</sup>

Given the risks to Oregon's marine ecosystems and coastal economy, it is clear that legislation to ban offshore oil and gas development is the right decision. Such legislation would protect our coast, our ocean and economy, and maintain Oregon's long-standing tradition and policies designed to promote ocean conservation and the management of sustainable uses.

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

*(Endnotes on reverse)*

---

<sup>i</sup> Oregon Coastal Zone Management Association. 2006. A Demographic and Economic Description of the Oregon Coast. <http://www.oczma.org/>

<sup>ii</sup> In the years following the 2002 *Prestige* oil spill off the coast of Spain, the coastal fishing and aquaculture industry lost \$72 million in revenue, and \$159 million was lost in tourism. (Garza-Gill, M. Dolores, et al. 2006. Estimating the short-term economic damages from the Prestige oil spill in the Galician fisheries and tourism, *Ecological Economics*, 58:842-849.)

<sup>iii</sup> On August 21, 2009, the Montara offshore oil and gas platform started leaking up to 2,000 barrels of oil and gas a day. The spill was not stopped until November 3, 2009.

<sup>iv</sup> 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.

<sup>v</sup> Ibid.