

May 5, 2025

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chairman
House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C., 20515

The Honorable Jared Huffman
Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources
1332 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C., 20515

Dear Chair Westerman, Ranking Member Huffman, and Members of the House Natural Resources Committee,

On behalf of the millions of Americans that we represent, the undersigned groups urge you to oppose mandated leasing for offshore oil and gas drilling in budget reconciliation.

The House Natural Resources Committee's piece of the congressional majority's budget reconciliation bill would cut coastal resilience funding for communities while forcing taxpayers to bankroll oil and gas companies with new lease sales, lower royalty rates, fast-tracked permits, and environmental cleanup costs, even as those same companies report record profits. The majority's bill mandates new lease sales in Gulf and Alaskan waters home to endangered whales and marine life, including at least 30 lease sales in the Gulf of Mexico, each spanning at least 80 million acres, and 6 lease sales in Alaska's Cook Inlet. The bill would also create pay-to-play options for oil and gas companies to receive fast-tracked permits and exemptions from judicial or agency review. Fossil fuel companies would also benefit from sweeping exemptions from bedrock environmental laws including the Endangered Species Act (ESA), Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA).

While the bill looks to expand offshore oil and gas drilling in our ocean, the Trump administration is simultaneously rolling back safety regulations for fossil fuel energy projects. Weakening safeguards to fast-track fossil fuel projects puts workers, coastal residents, and marine ecosystems in danger. Expanding offshore drilling threatens [billion-dollar tourism and fishing industries](#), and recreation — which together support millions of jobs — all while locking us into more fossil fuel pollution and increasing the risk of future oil spills.

The majority's reconciliation bill puts our safety, livelihoods, and future at risk, especially the 40% of Americans who live near the coast. Slashing ocean protections and climate investments isn't just anti-science — it's anti-family, anti-worker, and anti-American. More offshore drilling means more oil spills, more pollution, and more climate disasters for the communities already on the frontlines of climate change. This is especially true for communities in Louisiana, Texas, and Mississippi, which have already borne the brunt of decades of pollution, sea-level rise, and fossil fuel development.

Numerous reports have found that any new fossil fuel development, including drilling in our ocean, is incompatible with limiting global warming to [1.5 degrees Celsius](#). The results of global reliance on oil and gas is ever more evident with each passing year. Climate-fueled disasters are already driving up insurance rates and property losses, especially in coastal communities. 2024 was the [hottest year on record](#), and, in 2024 alone, twenty-seven climate disasters cost the United States [\\$184.8 billion](#). Cutting Inflation Reduction Act funding for projects that safeguard ports, roads, and homes from flooding, sea-level rise, and erosion will lead to even higher disaster recovery and insurance costs for taxpayers.

The American people don't want new offshore drilling. This was made clear during the public comment period for the most recent five-year offshore oil and gas leasing program, which received over 900,000 comments calling for no new offshore oil and gas lease sales in the final program. Despite this opposition, the House reconciliation bill would limit public input, and exempt oil and gas companies from administrative and judicial review to shield polluters from accountability and boost tax cuts for billionaires. In doing so, the bill strips communities of their last line of defense against harmful projects, and all but guarantees that harmful drilling projects will move forward, no matter the risks they pose or the laws they break.

Instead of expanding offshore drilling, Congress should end taxpayer subsidies for a trillion-dollar industry, close tax loopholes, and ensure corporations pay their fair share. These measures would *truly* address the deficit while safeguarding our ocean for future generations.

Sincerely,

Alaska Wilderness League
Animal Welfare Institute (AWI)
Animals Are Sentient Beings, Inc.
Azul
Bayou City Waterkeeper
Carolina Ocean Alliance
Center for Biological Diversity
Climate Hawks Vote
Climate Justice Alliance
Conservation Law Foundation
Dayenu: A Jewish Call to Climate Action
Defenders of Wildlife
EarthEcho International
Earthjustice
Environmental Action Community of Western N.C.
Environmental Defense Center
Environmental Justice Ministry Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church
Fish On
Friends of the Earth

Futureswell
Greenpeace USA
Healthy Gulf
Healthy Ocean Coalition
Hip Hop Caucus
League of Conservation Voters
Marine Conservation Institute
Marine Mammal Alliance Nantucket
Micah Six Eight Mission
Montana Environmental Information Center
Monterey Bay Aquarium
MoveOn.org HobokenRESIST!
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
North American Climate, Conservation and Environment(NACCE)
Ocean Conservancy
Ocean Conservation Research
Ocean Defense Initiative
Oceana
Oil and Gas Action Network
Oil Change International
Our Revolution Ocean County
Pacific Whale Foundation
PDA NJ
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania
Plastic Pollution Coalition
Puvunga Wetlands Protectors
Resource Renewal Institute
Sea Sport Cruises, Inc.
Seneca Lake Guardian
Sierra Club
SoCal 350 Climate Action
Southern Environmental Law Center
Sovereign Inupiat for a Living Arctic (SILA)
Sunflower Alliance
Surfrider Foundation
Sustainable Ocean Alliance
The Last Plastic Straw
The Ocean Project
Turtle Island Restoration Network
Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community
Zero Hour
198 methods
350 Bay Area Action
350 Conejo / San Fernando Valley
350Hawaii