

environmental
DEFENSE CENTER



July 29, 2010

Honorable Janet Wolf
Chair, Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
County Administrative Building, Fourth Floor
105 E. Anapamu St.
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

RE: Support for S. 3358 – West Coast Ocean Protection Act of 2010

Dear Chair Wolf:

The Environmental Defense Center (EDC), on behalf of its more than 2,000 members, would like to express our strong support for the West Coast Protection Act of 2010, federal legislation that would protect our precious coastal resources from the untenable risks associated with off-shore oil production, and urge that you and the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors do the same.

The EDC is a non-profit, public interest law firm that has worked to protect California's natural resources, coast, and ocean for more than 30 years. The EDC's mission is to protect and enhance the environment through education, advocacy and legal action. Working primarily in Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, and Ventura counties, the EDC represents dozens of non-profit organizations within this region and beyond.

As the unfortunate victims of one of the nation's first major offshore oil spills—the 1969 Santa Barbara Oil Spill—our community is well aware of the devastating risks inherent in offshore oil production. Yet, with millions of gallons of oil currently fouling vast stretches of the Gulf of Mexico, amounting to what President Obama referred to as “the worst environmental disaster America has ever faced,”¹ we are reminded of the dangers drilling presents to our own coast and the regrettable lack of permanent federal protections against further development.

Enactment of the West Coast Ocean Protection Act, which would bar the Federal Government from issuing any new oil and gas leases off the coasts of California, Oregon and Washington, would ensure that future generations need not fear the potential for another environmental disaster that accompanies further development of the Pacific Outer Continental

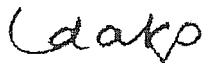
¹ June 15, 2010 Presidential address from the Oval Office

Shelf. Given Santa Barbara's visceral history with offshore oil, the Board is in a unique position with regards to this legislation, and a show of support would go a long ways toward its eventual passage.

As a leader in coastal protection, California has made it abundantly clear it does not want oil production off its coast. In the four decades since the 1969 Spill, our State has opposed new Federal leasing and prevented any further State leasing. Despite this, the Federal Government continued to allow for the development of oil and gas leases beyond the state's jurisdiction—a practice it could easily take up again. Help protect our precious coastline from the horrors of offshore oil by supporting this crucial piece of legislation. Our coastal resources are too valuable, and our future generations too important, not to.

The EDC thanks you for your continued leadership on this important issue, and for considering our comments. Please feel free to contact us if we can answer any questions or provide additional information.

Sincerely,



Linda Krop
Chief Counsel