



**CALIFORNIA COASTAL PROTECTION NETWORK**  
906 Garden Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101 • 805-637-3037  
[WWW.COASTALADVOCATES.COM](http://WWW.COASTALADVOCATES.COM)

August 31, 2009

Supervisor Joe Centeno, Chair  
Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors  
105 East Anapamu Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

**RE: Recommendations regarding the draft proposed Five-Year Outer Continental Shelf Leasing Program**

Dear Chair Centeno and Honorable Supervisors,

On behalf of the California Coastal Protection Network, I am writing to urge the Board to submit comments to the Department of Interior on the proposed Five Year Outer Continental Shelf Leasing Plan that clearly state that the County of Santa Barbara is opposed to any new federal offshore oil leasing off its coast.

The Department of the Interior (DOI) is required by law to prepare a leasing program every five years. The 2007-2012 plan in effect today does not identify any new leasing off the California coast. However, prior to leaving office, the Bush Administration prepared and circulated for comment the next 5 year leasing program two years ahead of schedule. This draft leasing program differs dramatically from the existing plan and calls for new leasing off the California coast, including the Santa Maria basin offshore Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties and the Santa Barbara Channel offshore Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. The plan also calls for new leasing in the Ecological Preserve offshore the City of Santa Barbara and the unincorporated area of Montecito

Concurrent with the release of the new draft leasing program, the federal protections that previously prohibited new federal offshore oil leasing off California and other coastal areas were removed. President Bush terminated the Presidential Executive Order that placed certain areas off limits to new leasing and Congress failed to reauthorize the federal offshore oil leasing moratorium. These dual actions have left the California coast extremely vulnerable to calls for new and expanded offshore oil drilling.

Consideration of this new leasing program comes at a critical time for Santa

Barbara County. There are several proposals to commence new or expanded drilling in State Waters. The PXP proposal for the Tranquillon Ridge field, the first new offshore oil lease in state waters in over 40 years, was originally approved by this Board. The PXP proposal was subsequently denied by the State Lands Commission as not being in the best interest of the State. As recently as July, the PXP proposal was the subject of legislation proposed by Assemblymember Chuck DeVore (R-Irvine) to remove the long-standing jurisdiction of the State Lands Commission in place since 1938 in order to approve the project. In addition, Venoco has proposed to develop oil and gas reserves from existing leases offshore Carpinteria and to extend the boundaries of two leases offshore Ellwood and to recommission operations at its offshore Pier to produce oil from the Elwood offshore oil field for a period of approximately 12 years. Finally, Sunset Exploration and Exxon Mobil have also expressed interest in development of the Tranquillon Ridge Field.

Given these developments, it is essential that the Board of Supervisors send a clear message to the Department of Interior that rejects any new federal leasing off the Santa Barbara County coast.

The clear risks of new oil drilling are underscored by the recent ongoing offshore oil spill off the Western Australia coast. While well fracture is the suspected cause, news reports indicate that the spill, which is expected to continue for weeks before being capped, may ultimately equal the magnitude of the Exxon Valdez disaster. At the present time, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority reports that the slick covers an area 25 nautical miles by 70 nautical miles.

In April, 2008, this Board adopted a resolution asking the Secretary of Interior not to issue any new oil and gas leases off the coastal of California as part of the current draft leasing program and to reinstate the federal offshore oil and gas leasing moratoria. CCPN concurs with County staff's recommendation that this resolution be forwarded again to the Department of Interior making clear that the County is opposed to both the proposed mass leasing offshore Santa Barbara and the massive industrialization that it would require.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Jordan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Susan Jordan, Director

# The Sydney Morning Herald

## Oil slick creeping closer to coast, say observers

BEN CUBBY ENVIRONMENT REPORTER

August 31, 2009

THE oil spill off Western Australia is creeping to within 20 kilometres of the coast, covering an area populated by many endangered fish species, local observers and the Greens say.

The Federal Government maintained yesterday that the slick was still 150 kilometres offshore. Daily aerial surveys by the Australian Marine Safety Authority showed the slick drifting further out into the Timor Sea, the Resources Minister, Martin Ferguson, said.

The West Atlas oil rig, operated by a Thai Government-owned company is thought to have been leaking about 470,000 litres of oil a day since an accident caused the rig's evacuation on August 21. ***The leak may not be stopped for another six weeks, the operator, PTTEP Australasia, said. This means that before the pipe is plugged the volume of crude oil escaping into the ocean may equal the amount released during the devastating 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska.***

A Greens senator, Rachael Siewert, said she had seen what appeared to be ribbons of oil on the water 20 kilometres off Cape Voltaire, in northern Western Australia, and more than 200 kilometres from the stricken oil platform.

"There was an oily sheen that was visible in the tideline, the same as the sheen we saw around the rig itself," Senator Siewert said. "It's wrong to say the coast is not at risk. The wind and tidal movements appear to be bringing the oil closer to the coast, and if it gets there it will have a significant impact."

This story was found at: <http://www.smh.com.au/environment/water-issues/oil-slick-creeping-closer-to-coast-say-observers-20090830-f3zo.html>