



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Agenda Number:

Submitted on:
(COB Stamp)

Department Name: BOS
Department No.: 011
Agenda Date: June 10, 2025
Placement: Administrative Agenda
Estimated Time:
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from: <Insert Date>
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Director(s): Supervisors Hartmann & Capps *JH* *CH* *FM L.C.*
Contact: Gina Fischer *GF*
SUBJECT: Reaffirmation of County Opposition to New Offshore Oil Leasing in Response to BOEM's 11th National Outer Continental Shelf Leasing Program

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: *Yes*

Other Concurrence:

As to form: N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Adopt a resolution reaffirming the County of Santa Barbara's opposition to new offshore oil leasing off the coast of California in response to the U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's (BOEM) request for information regarding preparation of the 2025–2030 National Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Leasing Program, as published in the Federal Register on April 30, 2025 (Federal Register Doc. No. 2025-07479); and
- b) Determine that the recommended actions do not constitute a project subject to environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5), as they are administrative government activities that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes to the environment, and direct staff to file a Notice of Exemption on that basis.

Summary Text:

The U.S. Department of the Interior has initiated the development of the 2025–2030 Outer Continental Shelf Leasing Program and is seeking public input. In response, the Board of Supervisors is asked to adopt an updated resolution reaffirming the County's opposition to any new offshore oil leases off the California coast, consistent with the County's prior action in 2018 adopting Resolution

No. 18-22. The resolution cites the vital importance of coastal resources to the local economy, ecosystem, and quality of life in Santa Barbara County.

Discussion:

The April 30, 2025 Federal Register Notice (Vol. 90, No. 84, Doc. No. 2025-07479) invites public comments on the scope and priorities of the 11th National OCS Leasing Program. This effort could open the door to new federal offshore oil and gas leasing along the Pacific Coast, including areas off Santa Barbara County.

The Board of Supervisors previously adopted a resolution on January 30, 2018 opposing similar leasing efforts proposed in BOEM's 2019–2024 program. At that time, the Board cited the region's historical experiences with major oil spills in 1969 and 2015, the unique biodiversity of the Santa Barbara Channel, and the economic importance of tourism, recreation, and fishing. Those concerns remain urgent and relevant today.

Reaffirming the County's opposition aligns with a broad coalition of local governments, environmental organizations, and state officials who oppose expanded offshore drilling due to its risks to marine ecosystems, coastal economies, and climate.

Background:

Santa Barbara County has long been recognized as a national leader in environmental protection following the 1969 offshore oil spill, one of the worst in U.S. history. The 2015 Refugio pipeline rupture again underscored the high cost of offshore oil infrastructure failures.

Coastal tourism and recreation contribute significantly to the County's economy, and the waters offshore are home to marine protected areas and endangered species, including the blue whale. Public sentiment has consistently supported protection of these resources, as reflected in multiple statewide surveys and California legislative actions.

Special Instructions:

Transmit copies of the adopted resolution and cover letter to the officials and agencies listed in the attached 2018 transmittal letter, updated as needed. Submit formal comments to BOEM prior to the June 16, 2025 deadline in the Federal Register notice.

Attachments:

Attachment A – 2025 Resolution

Attachment B – 2025 Transmittal Letter

Attachment C – Resolution No. 18-22

Contact Information:

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