

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 22, 2014

Dr. Walter Cruickshank
Acting Director
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Dr. Cruickshank,

We are writing to urge the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) to not include any offshore oil and gas lease sales in the Washington/Oregon Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Planning Area in the Draft Proposed 2017-2022 OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program.

The Pacific Ocean off the coast of Oregon and Washington is a sensitive and vital ecosystem that supports sustainable fishing and tourism industries responsible for hundreds of thousands of jobs and over \$16 billion in economic activity. These waters also provide habitat to a wide variety of endangered and threatened species, including marine mammals, seabirds, turtles, and fish. This coastline is far too important to the people, the environment, and the economy of our states to put at risk through offshore oil and gas drilling.

The Washington and Oregon coasts deserve continued protection under numerous criteria listed in the OCS Lands Act. Local laws and public opinion have consistently opposed offshore drilling in the Pacific Northwest; the State of Oregon has a moratorium on drilling in state waters until 2020, and over 65 percent of comments from the those states opposed leasing in the comment period for the last Draft Proposed Program, even before people saw the devastating impacts of the *Deepwater Horizon* disaster. In addition, the estimated oil and gas resource base in the region is tremendously low, ranking 16th out of 22 OCS planning areas, with not even enough technically recoverable oil to meet U.S. demand for a month. The oil and gas industry is aware of this, which is why they have expressed no interest in leasing the Washington/Oregon planning area in response to recent requests for comments.

The true offshore energy potential in the region comes from renewable energy technologies such as wave, tidal, and wind. According to the Electric Power Research Institute, Oregon and Washington have the highest wave energy potential in the lower 48, almost as large as the resource along the entire Atlantic and Gulf Coasts combined, while the Department of Energy estimates the offshore wind energy potential of the two states to be over 340 gigawatts. BOEM has taken steps toward deployment of both of these technologies in the Pacific Northwest. We believe that BOEM should maintain their focus on these clean methods for generating energy from the ocean. These renewable resources should be explored in full consultation with other interested ocean users, such as local fishing fleets and tribal entities, in a manner that protects existing uses and also ensures adequate protections for marine life, particularly endangered species. Managed properly, developing these resources is much less

problematic than trying to begin an offshore oil and gas leasing program in the region that could generate tremendous environmental damage and create spatial conflicts with sustainable industries and renewable energy installations.

We all saw the devastation inflicted on the Gulf Coast in the aftermath of the *Deepwater Horizon* tragedy in 2010, an event that the oil and gas industry insisted could never happen in U.S. waters. Assurances of safety and environmental protection mean nothing when one incident has the potential to utterly devastate our coastal economy and ecosystem. There is nothing to be gained by leasing the waters off the Pacific Northwest coast for oil and gas leasing; there is only tremendous and unnecessary risk. We urge you to resist any call to offer leases off the coasts of Washington and Oregon, and to continue the protections that our states depend on.

Thank you for consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,



Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress



Jeff Merkley
U.S. Senator



Ron Wyden
U.S. Senator



Patty Murray
U.S. Senator



Maria Cantwell
U.S. Senator



Jim McDermott
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Kurt Schrader
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



Dennis Heck
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress

Cc: The Honorable Sally Jewell, Secretary of the Interior
The Honorable Janice Schneider, Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals Management
Ms. Kelly Hammerle, Five Year Program Manager, BOEM