

MORE THAN A MILLION COMMENTS SUBMITTED IN OPPOSITION TO TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S OFFSHORE DRILLING PROPOSAL

New Ad Campaign Highlights Overwhelming Disapproval as Public Comment Deadline Nears

WASHINGTON, DC //March 6, 2018// More than 1.35 million comments have been registered in opposition to U.S. Department of Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's proposal to expand offshore drilling, according to a coalition of national environmental and conservation groups that includes the Natural Resources Defense Council, Greenpeace, Oceana, League of Conservation Voters, and others.

Friday is the deadline for the public to submit comments to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM).

The coalition is launching a robust series of print and digital advertisements nationally and in select markets highlighting the overwhelming bipartisan opposition to Trump's proposed five-year oil and gas leasing program.

A sample print ad can be seen [here](#). The digital advertisement is available [here](#).

Since Zinke announced the proposal in January, 15 coastal governors from both political parties have asked to have their states protected from offshore drilling. As well, more than 150 House Members and nearly 40 Senators, including from non-coastal states like Minnesota, Michigan, and Nevada have spoken out against the auctioning of these public waters. Zinke has said he will consider objections from state and local leaders and the public before finalizing the proposal. Yet, DOI's visitor logs reveal that Zinke and other Interior officials have disproportionately met with the oil and gas industry representatives, taking over 180 direct meetings in the last four months, [according to a report in the Washington Post](#).

Over 1.35 million public comments add to the wave of opposition from local, state and national leaders who have voiced their concerns to BOEM at more than a dozen listening sessions across the country.

Franz Matzner, director of Federal Affairs at the Natural Resources Defense Council, said: **"The Trump Administration's drilling proposal is reckless and backward-looking—and this massive public outcry shows the American people are not buying it. Our future is in clean energy jobs, not dirty, climate-wrecking fossil fuel production. Expanding offshore drilling would put us at risk of another catastrophic BP-scale oil spill, and the public won't accept this threat to so many coastal communities, economies and livelihoods, and to our oceans and marine life."**

Alex Taurel, deputy legislative director of the League of Conservation Voters, said: **"Secretary Zinke's risky offshore drilling plan has sparked a fierce backlash from people along our coasts and throughout the country. It's time for Secretary Zinke to stop playing games with our future, listen to the outpouring of opposition, and abandon his radical offshore drilling plan."**

Mary Sweeters, Greenpeace climate and energy campaigner of Greenpeace, said: **"The public, and even most governors of coastal states, strongly oppose Trump's offshore drilling plan. Expanding offshore drilling will accelerate the effects of climate change and endanger thousands of coastal communities. We should be transitioning away from toxic, risky fossil fuels, not doubling down on our addiction to them."**

Diane Hoskins, campaign director at Oceana, said: **"Secretary Zinke needs to protect our coast, not sell it out to the highest bidder. Local communities and most coastal governors are outraged by this radical plan that threatens to destroy our nation's thriving coastal economies, which rely on a clean coast for fishing, tourism and recreation. It's time for Washington to listen to the communities that have the most to lose and nothing to gain from dirty and dangerous offshore drilling."**

Sierra Club Lands Protection Program Director Athan Manuel said: **“The Trump administration's reckless effort to expose 90 percent of America's coasts to the dangers of offshore drilling has been met with strong, bipartisan opposition for good reason. Expanding offshore drilling would put our coasts, our climate, and our communities at risk, all for the benefit of the fossil fuel industry. From Florida to Anchorage, they're hearing the same message wherever they go: Americans want all of our coasts protected from offshore drilling.”**

Miyoko Sakashita, oceans program director at the Center for Biological Diversity, said: **“It's inspiring to watch coastal residents around the country reject this extremist plan. Californians turned out in huge numbers to protect the Pacific and fight dangerous drilling everywhere, including the Arctic. They understand offshore drilling is a dire threat to people and wildlife, whether it's oil spills today or sea-level rise tomorrow.”**

Steve Mashuda, managing attorney for Oceans at Earthjustice, said: **“This is the second time in recent history that more than a million Americans have turned out to demand that coastal communities and marine ecosystems remain protected under the five-year leasing plan. Whether we're talking about icy Arctic seas, biologically rich Gulf waters or iconic beaches dotting the Pacific and Atlantic shorelines, it's crystal clear that new offshore oil drilling would exacerbate climate disruption and expose treasured waters to the unacceptable risk of pollution and oil spills. We will continue to use the power of the law to fight this reckless proposal to expand offshore drilling.”**

Leah Donahey, Senior Campaign Director at Alaska Wilderness League, said: **“President Trump opposes windmills because he believes they would disrupt the ocean views from his golf course. But this plan and Trump's irresponsible quest for 'energy dominance' shows that he and his administration care nothing about the presence of oil rigs in vital Arctic marine habitat or the impact of oil spills on America's own coastal communities. Oil drilling is inherently risky. Spills are going to happen, no matter how 'responsible' you are. The Arctic is already ground zero for climate change, and if we are serious about winning the climate fight and protecting the Arctic from an oil disaster, the only sound choice is not to open massive new areas there to drilling.”**

The proposed drilling plan would drastically expand offshore drilling to nearly all of America's coastline including new areas of the Atlantic, Pacific, Gulf of Mexico—including the Eastern Gulf, and Alaska waters, and attempt to auction off permanently protected areas.

Specifically, it would expose U.S. Arctic waters—our last undeveloped ocean—to drilling, along with the Atlantic coast, the Pacific coast—which has not seen federal drilling for decades—and further threaten the Gulf of Mexico.

Americans' opposition to the Trump administration's move to expand dirty and dangerous offshore drilling and energy exploration includes: [tens of thousands of local businesses and hundreds of thousands of commercial fishing families](#) that depend on clean coasts, [the majority of Americans, over 150 coastal municipalities](#), many Alaska Natives, bipartisan lawmakers at the [local](#), [state](#) and [federal](#) levels, and a [host of faith and conservation leaders](#).

An earlier statement from 64 groups opposing the plan is [here](#).

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The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) is an international nonprofit environmental organization with more than 3 million members and online activists. Since 1970, our lawyers, scientists, and other environmental specialists have worked to protect the world's natural resources, public health, and the environment. NRDC has offices in New York City; Washington, D.C.; Los Angeles; San Francisco; Chicago; Bozeman, Montana; and Beijing. Visit us at www.nrdc.org and follow us on Twitter [@NRDC](https://twitter.com/NRDC).

Oceana is the largest international advocacy organization dedicated solely to ocean conservation. Oceana is rebuilding abundant and biodiverse oceans by winning science-based policies in countries that control one third of the world's wild fish catch. With over 200 victories that stop overfishing, habitat destruction, pollution and killing of threatened species like turtles and sharks, Oceana's campaigns are delivering results. A restored ocean means that one billion people can enjoy a healthy seafood meal, every day, forever. Together, we can save the oceans and help feed the world. Visit usa.oceana.org to learn more.

Greenpeace is the leading independent campaigning organization that uses peaceful protest and creative communication to expose global environmental problems and promote solutions that are essential to a green and peaceful future. Since its founding in 1971, Greenpeace has taken no money from governments and corporations, relying exclusively on individual contributions. We now work to protect our climate and communities, our forests, and our oceans in more than 50 countries. For more information, visit <http://www.greenpeace.org/>.

The League of Conservation Voters works to turn environmental values into national, state and local priorities. LCV, in collaboration with our state LCV partners, advocates for sound environmental laws and policies, holds elected officials accountable for their votes and actions, and elects pro-environment candidates who will champion our priority issues. Visit us at www.lcv.org, and follow us on Twitter [@LCVoters](https://twitter.com/LCVoters).