



## Staff Report

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**Honorable Mayor and Members of the Hermosa Beach City Council  
Regular Meeting of April 23, 2019**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF HERMOSA BEACH,  
CALIFORNIA, TO PROTECT THE COAST FROM OFFSHORE OIL  
AND GAS DRILLING AND EXPLORATION, AND OPPOSE A  
PROPOSED FEDERAL POLICY TO ENCOURAGE ENERGY  
EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION ON THE OUTER  
CONTINENTAL SHELF**

(Assistant to the City Manager Nico De Anda-Scaia)

**Recommended Action:**

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution to protect the coast from offshore oil and gas drilling and exploration, and oppose Presidential Executive Order 13795 titled "Implementing an America-First Offshore Energy Strategy," which establishes a policy to encourage energy exploration and production on the outer continental shelf.

**Executive Summary:**

On January 4, 2018, as directed by Presidential Executive Order 13795, the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Ocean Energy Management published a 2019-2024 National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Draft Proposed Program, which, if adopted, would potentially allow new offshore oil and gas drilling leases in previously restricted areas, including waters off the coast of California. By adopting the attached resolution, the City would join with over 70 other California cities and counties, and over 340 municipalities nationwide, in opposing the expansion of offshore oil and gas drilling activities.

**Background:**

In April 2017, Presidential Executive Order 13795 titled "Implementing an America-First Offshore Energy Strategy" was issued, establishing a policy to encourage energy exploration and production including oil and gas lease sales in the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). The OCS is roughly defined as the submerged lands, subsoil and seabed areas from 3 nautical miles (state jurisdiction) to 200 nautical miles off the coast of the United States (federal jurisdiction). On January 4, 2018, in response to the Executive Order, the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) released the 2019-2024 National OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Draft Proposed Program (Program) (**Attachment 1**). If adopted, this Program would potentially open up OCS areas for new offshore oil and gas drilling in previously restricted areas, including off the coast of California,

the U.S. Arctic and other locations. The 2019-2024 Program would replace the current 2017-2022 Program adopted as of November 18, 2016, which currently restricts new offshore oil and gas drilling in the OCS.

Although there are currently active oil and gas drilling operations off the coast of California, the State's regulatory agency, the State Lands Commission, has placed a moratorium on new oil and gas leases since 1969, largely as a result of a blow-out from an oil platform off the coast of Santa Barbara, which spilled 80,000 to 100,000 barrels of oil, fouling miles of California coastline from Goleta to Ventura, polluting waters and killing thousands of birds and marine animals. At the time, the spill was the largest in U.S. waters and now ranks third behind the 2010 Deepwater Horizon in the Gulf of Mexico and the 1989 Exxon Valdez spill in Alaska. Federal leases have not been granted since 1984.

On January 23, 2018, the Hermosa Beach City Council approved a letter of support for State companion bills AB 1775 and SB 834 to prohibit new oil and gas lease agreements in state-regulated coastal waters up to three miles from the coastline (**Attachment 2**). These bills were signed into law on September 9, 2018.

#### **Discussion:**

By approving the attached resolution, the City of Hermosa Beach would join over 70 California cities and counties, including the Cities of Malibu, Los Angeles, Santa Monica, El Segundo, Manhattan Beach, Redondo Beach and Rancho Palos Verdes in opposing the 2019-2024 National OCS Draft Proposed Program and expansion of offshore oil and gas drilling operations. In addition, the Draft Proposed Program is opposed nationwide by over 340 municipalities, a large number of elected officials, including the Governors of California, Oregon and Washington, and several California regulatory entities including the Coastal Commission, Fish and Game Commission and State Lands Commission.

Maintaining the moratorium on new offshore oil and gas drilling would reduce the risk of spills impacting recreational, commercial and educational activities, and marine wildlife that depend on healthy and clean coastal waters and beaches. In May 2015, a pipeline that ruptured near Refugio State Beach in Santa Barbara, caused oil and tar balls sourced from local oil drilling platforms, to spill into the Pacific Ocean reaching as far south as Orange County. This resulted in the closure of miles of California beaches, including Hermosa Beach, and significant negative impacts to local wildlife. Increasing oil and gas drilling rather than developing renewable energy sources would also increase greenhouse gas production and exacerbate climate change, resulting in sea rise, droughts, heat waves, wildfires, stronger hurricanes, reduced polar ice/glacial retreat, and ocean acidification.

For these reasons, staff recommends that the City Council adopt the attached resolution (**Attachment 3**) to oppose new leases for oil and gas activities off the coast of California and in all other U.S. waters; and support a ban on new offshore oil and gas drilling, fracking and related

techniques in federal and state waters off the California coast.

**General Plan Consistency:**

This report and associated recommendation have been evaluated for their consistency with the City's General Plan. The resolution to protect the coast from new offshore oil and gas drilling leases would assist in fulfilling the following goals:

**Governance Element**

*1.6 Long-term considerations.* Prioritize decisions that provide long-term community benefit and discourage decisions that provide short-term community benefit but reduce long-term opportunities.

**Land Use Element**

*9.3 Ecosystem preservation.* Ensure that any future proposed offshore facilities do not have unacceptable adverse effects on the integrity, stability, and complexity of the marine ecosystem, important marine habitat, and areas important to fisheries, navigation, recreation, and aesthetic enjoyment.

**Sustainability + Conservation Element**

*2.1 State targets and goals.* Reduce greenhouse gas emissions at a rate that meets long-term State targets and goals to reduce emissions by at least 66% below 2005 levels by 2040.

**Fiscal Impact:**

There is no fiscal impact to the City associated with adoption of this resolution.

**Attachments:**

1. Link to 2019-2024 National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program Draft Proposed Program
2. Link to City Council 01-23-18 Meeting - Item 6b
3. Resolution

**Respectfully Submitted by:** Kevin Nagata, Management Analyst

**Concur:** Kristy Morris, Environmental Analyst

**Concur:** Nico De Anda-Scaia, Assistant to the City Manager

**Noted for Fiscal Impact:** Viki Copeland, Finance Director

**Legal Review:** Mike Jenkins, City Attorney

**Approved:** Suja Lowenthal, City Manager