

October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

Our 61 organizations thank you for the critically-important action you've taken on climate. We now ask you to take the next step in achieving your ambitions both to steer this nation's strong commitment to a global climate change solution and to safeguard historically-disadvantaged people and communities from climate-related and other threats: proposing no new offshore oil and gas leases in the BOEM final National Outer Continental Shelf Offshore Oil and Gas Leasing Program (Five-Year Program). Continuing to drill for massive amounts of fossil fuel in public waters off our coasts threatens people, businesses, marine life, and our climate. And the fossil fuel pipelines, refineries, and other polluting industrial infrastructure onshore jeopardizes public health and the environment in nearby communities. We urge your administration and the Department of Interior to select Alternative A (the No Action Alternative) from the Proposed Five-Year Program's Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement, assuring no new federal oil and gas development in the 2023-2028 Five-Year Program.

New leasing is unnecessary to meet the nation's future energy needs. Oil and gas companies hold thousands of unused leases to drill on U.S. public lands and waters. In the Gulf of Mexico, corporations currently lease over 10.5 million acres of our ocean, and they're only using 25% of that. According to industry experts, the fossil fuel industry could maintain current levels of oil and gas production for a decade just from existing leases. And there would be no meaningful change in price in the absence of new leasing. In the meantime, fuel demand will be dropping steadily, making it unnecessary for industry to begin producing from the leases that would be in the next Five-Year Program. The latest modeling of transportation electrification and efficiency policies already on the books projects demand for petroleum to fall 13 percent by 2030 and 25 percent by 2035.

It is important to emphasize that new offshore leasing will not lower gasoline prices in the near term. For months, Big Oil has been exploiting the Ukraine crisis, seeking to manipulate the public into thinking that new offshore leasing would lower current gas prices. In truth, production from new offshore leases wouldn't come online for at least 10 years. Meanwhile, these same fossil fuel companies are awash in profits from the high prices they are charging at the pump – close to [\\$100 billion in just the first three months](#) of this year. In the second quarter of 2022, ExxonMobil, Chevron, and Shell all posted their [highest ever](#) quarterly profits, and profits at just five companies totaled \$55 billion. We don't need to sell off more of our ocean to Big Oil at our expense and to the detriment of our communities, wildlife, and climate.

Decisions made in the next Five-Year Program have consequences far beyond its term. Federal offshore oil and gas leases—and the fossil fuel production resulting from these leases—can last decades. Blowouts and spills, like the 2010 BP Deepwater Horizon disaster and the Huntington Beach spill last year in California, also cause ecological and economic damages that can last for many years. Expanding offshore drilling would mean maintaining unnecessary dependence on dirty energy, more carbon and toxic pollution, more children with asthma, and more risk of catastrophic spills. Expert

modeling shows that new offshore oil and gas leasing would make it nearly impossible to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius by the end of this century, which is what scientists have determined is necessary to prevent catastrophic climate change impacts. It makes no sense to lock in decades of such harm from new ocean drilling leases and risk such consequences now that we have alternatives at hand in the form of the clean energy transition that you have championed.

Most of the alternatives set out in the Proposed Five-Year Program would continue to target oil and gas drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. For too long, this region has been the nation's fossil fuel sacrifice zone and a place for multinational corporations to profit from peoples' misery. Gulf communities have borne the brunt of the toxic fallout from U.S. oil and gas drilling and petrochemical production, including the devastation from the BP disaster. [Fifteen percent of U.S. crude oil](#) is currently produced in the Gulf of Mexico. The proposed program also includes a potential lease sale in Cook Inlet, Alaska that would similarly jeopardize the communities and sensitive habitat with more oil and gas leasing. It is beyond time for the country to invest in a just transition for people of the Gulf region and Alaska to sustainable, good-paying jobs in an environment that isn't endangering their health.

True energy security means continuing to transition to clean energy sources. It means getting more clean power from the wind and sun right here at home. And making our cars, homes, and workplaces more efficient so we do more with less waste. Justly-sourced renewable energy creates millions of good-paying jobs here in America that can't be outsourced. Renewable energy strengthens our economy and isn't subject to wild fluctuations in price.

President Biden, before you is a perfect opportunity to continue to bring the management of our public resources into alignment with your climate goals. By finalizing the next Five Year Program with no new leasing, you can protect our ocean wildlife, coastal communities, and climate from unnecessary harm. We stand ready to support and assist your administration in this effort.

Thank you,

Azul  
Bold Alliance  
California Marine Sanctuary Foundation  
Center for the Blue Economy  
Chesapeake Climate Action Network  
Chispa LCV  
Chispa Texas  
Climate Hawks Vote  
Conservation Law Foundation  
Cook Inletkeeper  
Earthjustice  
Elected Officials to Protect America  
Endangered Species Coalition  
Environmental Action Committee of West Marin  
Environmental Defense Center  
Environmental Investigation Agency  
Food & Water Watch  
GreenLatinos

Greenpeace USA  
Healthy Ocean Coalition  
Hispanic Access Foundation  
Idaho Clinicians for Climate and Health  
Inland Ocean Coalition  
International Fund for Animal Welfare  
International Marine Mammal Project of Earth  
Island Institute  
League of Conservation Voters  
Lynnhaven River NOW  
Marine Conservation Institute  
Marine Mammal Alliance Nantucket (MMAN)  
Michigan Clinicians for Climate Action  
Mission Blue  
Mystic Aquarium  
National Ocean Protection Coalition  
National Parks Conservation Association  
Natural Resources Defense Council

New England Aquarium  
New Hampshire Nurses Association  
Commission on Planetary Health  
NH Healthcare Workers for Climate Action  
North Carolina Clinicians for Climate Action  
Northcoast Environmental Center  
NY4WHALES  
Ocean Alliance  
Ocean Defense Initiative  
Oceana  
Oceanic Preservation Society  
Patagonia  
Physicians for Social Responsibility  
Rachel Carson Council  
Restore America's Estuaries  
SCHPCA  
Starmer Systems, LLC  
Surfrider Foundation  
Taproot Earth  
The Ocean Project  
The Wilderness Society  
Turtle Island Restoration Network  
Urban Ocean Lab  
Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment  
Virginia League of Conservation Voters  
Waterway Advocates  
Whale and Dolphin Conservation

CC:

The Honorable Debra Haaland, Secretary of the Interior  
The Honorable Brenda Mallory, White House Council on Environmental Quality  
Amanda Lefton, Director, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management  
John Podesta, Senior Advisor for Clean Energy Innovation and Implementation  
Tommy Beaudreau, Deputy Secretary of the Interior  
Laura Daniel Davis, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary - Land and Mineral Management  
Steve Feldgus, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management  
Sara Gonzalez-Rothi, Director-Water, Council on Environmental Quality  
Stephenne Harding, Senior Director for lands, Council on Environmental Quality