

November 16, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

On behalf of 32 groups and organizations, we want to thank you for the bold vision you have set out for how the nation should respond to the global climate crisis and for the actions you have already taken to help make this vision a reality. As a next step to meet your Administration's climate goals and to protect coastal communities and economies, we urge you to cancel the offshore oil and gas lease sales remaining in the 2017-2022 Five-Year Program and to offer a new five-year program with no leasing.

As we've seen recently with the devastating Huntington Beach oil spill in California and the record-breaking number of oil spills after Hurricane Ida tore through the Gulf, the threats from offshore drilling are felt by communities across the country. Offshore drilling in the United States threatens both the health of our oceans and our coastal communities. Catastrophic oil spills, like the 2010 BP Drilling disaster on the Deepwater Horizon oil rig, and now the Huntington Beach spill pose an enormous financial risk to businesses whose operations depend on a healthy ocean. Ecological, economic, and public health damages from catastrophic oil spills last for decades. The fact remains: every oil spill began as a lease sale.

The nation also simply cannot meet its climate action goals like limiting warming to below 1.5 degrees Celsius and drastically reducing greenhouse gas emissions--the goals you have so compellingly articulated--if we continue new offshore leasing. Lease sales have long-term consequences, with production on some offshore leases occurring many decades after disposition. The Interior Department estimates that the pending lease sale 257 on its own will result in the production of up to 1.1 billion barrels of oil and 4 trillion cubic feet of natural gas over the next 50 years, which is the equivalent of a year's worth of carbon emissions from 182 coal-fired power plants. While lawsuits from oil producing states are creating pressure to move forward with lease sales, we're deeply concerned by the failure to adequately analyze and take into account these and other environmental impacts in deciding to move forward with that sale. As the most recent IPCC report makes clear, what we do, or fail to do, with such far-reaching decisions could determine whether we face a livable or catastrophic climate in the decade ahead.

Canceling the remaining lease sales in the 2017-2022 five-year program will support your commitments to reduce emissions and increase resilience while providing good jobs, protecting vulnerable communities, and safeguarding our natural resources. The technologies and policies we need to transition our economy to clean energy exist today. We have to invest in clean energy and a just transition away from fossil fuels.

Once again, we thank you for your commitment to addressing the climate crisis, and your recognition that the ocean is crucial to that effort. Your administration should now take one of the most important steps it can to both combat the climate crisis and directly protect the ocean

and those that depend on it: cancel the remaining four lease sales and offer a five-year program with a null leasing schedule. We stand ready to work with your Administration on this effort.

Sincerely,

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Brown Girl Surf

Center for Biological Diversity

Climate Law & Policy Project

Continental Divide Trail Coalition

Cook Inletkeeper

EarthEcho International

Earthjustice

Environment America

Environmental Defense Center

Friends of the Earth

Greenpeace USA

Healthy Gulf

Hispanic Access Foundation

Hispanic Federation

Inland Ocean Coalition

League of Conservation Voters

Lynnhaven River NOW

Mission Blue

Monterey Bay Aquarium

National Aquarium

Natural Resources Defense Council

National Ocean Protection Coalition

Ocean Defense Initiative

Oceana

Only One

Progressive Democrats of America

Seattle Aquarium

Southern Environmental Law Center

Surfrider Foundation

The Wilderness Society

True Transition