

# OFFSHORE DRILLING

October 2016

## THE SITUATION



The Department of the Interior is currently planning for the next five years of offshore oil and gas lease sales. The Administration's latest proposal removed potential lease sales from the Atlantic Ocean, but left open the possibility of additional lease sales in the Arctic. Meanwhile, no new offshore oil and gas safety or environmental laws have been passed in over 35 years.

## WHY IS THIS A PROBLEM?

The 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill is considered the largest environmental disaster in U.S. history. The spill in the Gulf of Mexico highlighted the continuing safety and environmental risks from offshore drilling. The Administration implemented new safety standards, but the oil and gas industry continues to fight commonsense regulations and wants to act as though it's business as usual.

## WHY SHOULD AMERICANS CARE?

Offshore drilling in the Arctic has the potential to destroy one of the last great unspoiled regions on Earth, as well as contribute to climate change and harm native villages that depend on subsistence hunting for their livelihoods. Residents of the Gulf Coast and CA face the risk of additional major oil spills, such as the Deepwater Horizon in 2010 or the Santa Barbara blowout in 1969.

## WHAT'S THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT?

The risk of offshore drilling to fisheries and tourism is immediate, while the risk of oil spills is constant during exploration and throughout production. Seismic testing would also take place in newly opened areas, which has the potential to significantly harm wildlife.

## WHAT'S CONGRESS DOING?

Congress has done nothing to update outdated safety provisions, leaving us at risk of another major offshore blowout like the Deepwater Horizon.



Democrats believe that the quality of our environment and the sustainable economic benefits that come from other uses of our oceans, such as tourism and recreation, are more important than allowing the oil industry to drill along every mile of our coastline. Drilling should not be allowed in the Arctic or Atlantic oceans, and safety and environmental standards should be significantly strengthened.



Republicans have repeatedly tried to force additional offshore lease sales all over the country and to allocate proceeds from waters - which belong to all Americans - to individual states. Republicans made no effort to update the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCSLA) following the Deepwater Horizon disaster; instead, they have fought environmental regulations and stronger safety standards at every turn.

## HOW DO WE MOVE FORWARD?

Congress should work on updating OCSLA to implement the recommendations of the Presidential Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling and improve environmental and safety standards in the law.

## THE FACTS

Despite Republican claims, offshore oil production reached a 5-year high in 2015, and is expected to reach record levels in 2016 and 2017 (ONRR & EIA)

**59%** of Californians oppose more oil drilling off the California coast (Gallup)