

Opportunity to Comment on Proposal to Allow Offshore Drilling

The Trump Administration's plan to allow drilling along coasts of the United States (except Florida) will begin moving ahead this year, if not modified after the public comment period. This will take our country in the wrong direction in addressing climate change. There is still time, but not much, to submit comments on behalf of your League opposing the proposed policy shift. All concerned Leagues and members are urged to do so. Below is information on how to file comments and some message points you may wish to consider.

Public comment is being received through the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) website until 11:59 Eastern on March 9th. Go to this link to learn more and upload and submit your comments:

<https://www.boem.gov/National-Program-Comment/> The pertinent docket is 'National Outer Continental Shelf Program.'

Background

LWVUS and many state and local Leagues have long opposed new oil and gas drilling off our coasts. Several Leagues have now submitted comments on the current proposal to open up the oil and gas leases to new drilling.

The LWV of the Lower Cape Fear, North Carolina, for example, has written an excellent letter addressing many important points. See

bettergov.nc.lwvnet.org/files/position_on_off_shore_drilling.pdf

The substantial issues raised in the comments submitted have been ignored.

Some additional points you may find helpful are below.

- This policy will slow our nation's progress towards solving the climate change problem. It will commit us to another several decades of carbon-intensive energy production and delay our transition to sustainable low-carbon energy.
- The policy's intent to prop up the fossil fuel industries is at odds with job creation as well. Currently, the clean energy sector provides five times as many jobs as do the fossil fuel industries. Slowing this growing sector of the economy fails Americans economically as well as environmentally.
- LWVUS positions provide solid rationale for opposing the expansion of offshore drilling.
- Under Resource Management, the League calls for "special consideration for the protection of areas of critical environmental concern, natural hazards, historical importance and aesthetic value...[with] special attention to maintaining and improving the environmental quality of urban communities."
- Under Environmental Protection and Pollution Control, the League supports "the preservation of the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the ecosystem and maximum protection of public health and the environment."
- Under Land Use, the League calls for special attention to "fragile or historical lands, where development could result in irreversible damage (such as shore-lands of rivers, lakes and streams, estuaries and bays; rare or valuable ecosystems and geological formations; significant wildlife habitats; unique scenic or historic areas; wetlands; deserts."
- Your local and state Leagues may also have positions that apply.

Possible points for your comments to BOEM

Message points that may be useful to address the proposed leasing plan:

- In many of the targeted regions, the estimated small quantity of oil and gas does not justify the threat to the coastal waters and shoreline, which support a highly diverse animal and plant life essential to thriving tourism and fishery industries in so many areas.
- Among the criteria BOEM will use in evaluating the opening of an area to offshore drilling are laws, goals and policies of affected states and environmental sensitivity and marine productivity.
- Since the initial solicitation for comments, the governments of Pacific coastal states and Atlantic states (except Florida, Georgia, Maine, and South Carolina) have objected to the opening of the offshore leases to new drilling (section 9.2 of the Draft Proposed Program). The wishes of these states should be respected.
- Appendix A of the DPP presents summaries of public comments, including those of governors and state agencies (A.1), local governments (A.2), state-level elected officials (A.7) and Members of Congress (A.8).
- Your comments should be specific with respect to your state, if possible.

A link to the Draft Proposed Program can be found here: <https://www.boem.gov/National-Program-Learn/>