

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2025

Statement on Efforts To Protect Oceans and Coasts From Offshore Oil and Gas Drilling

January 6, 2025

I am taking action to protect the East and West coasts, the eastern Gulf of Mexico, and Alaska's Northern Bering Sea from oil and natural gas drilling and the harm it can cause. My decision reflects what coastal communities, businesses, and beachgoers have known for a long time: that drilling off these coasts could cause irreversible damage to places we hold dear and is unnecessary to meet our Nation's energy needs. It is not worth the risks. As the climate crisis continues to threaten communities across the country and we are transitioning to a clean energy economy, now is the time to protect these coasts for our children and grandchildren.

From California to Florida, Republican and Democratic Governors, Members of Congress, and coastal communities alike have worked and called for greater protection of our ocean and coastlines from harms that offshore oil and natural gas drilling can bring. In Alaska, dozens of Tribes have fought to protect the Northern Bering Sea, a vital ocean ecosystem that supports their traditional ways of life. Vice President Harris and I have listened. In balancing the many uses and benefits of America's ocean, it is clear to me that the relatively minimal fossil fuel potential in the areas I am withdrawing do not justify the environmental, public health, and economic risks that would come from new leasing and drilling.

The Deepwater Horizon oil spill, a man-made catastrophe that took the lives of eleven people and spilled millions of barrels of oil into the waters of the Gulf of Mexico, is a solemn reminder of the costs and risks of offshore drilling to the health and resilience of our coasts and fisheries and underscores the importance of the legal protections I am putting in place today. It is also one of the reasons why on my watch we have strengthened offshore safety standards for workers and communities on the front lines of existing operations nationwide, and rapidly accelerated the development of safer and cleaner energy sources, including the approval of eleven offshore wind projects.

From day one, I have delivered on the most ambitious climate and conservation agenda in our country's history. And, over the last 4 years, I have conserved more than 670 million acres of America's lands and waters, more than any other President in history. Our country's remarkable conservation and restoration progress has been locally led by Tribes, farmers and ranchers, fishermen, small businesses, and outdoor recreation enthusiasts across the country. Together, our "America the Beautiful" initiative put the United States on track to meet my ambitious goal to conserve at least 30 percent of our Nation's lands and waters by 2030.

We do not need to choose between protecting the environment and growing our economy or between keeping our ocean healthy, our coastlines resilient, and the food they produce secure and keeping energy prices low. Those are false choices. Protecting America's coasts and ocean is the right thing to do and will help communities and the economy to flourish for generations to come.

Categories: Statements by the President : Oceans and coasts, protection efforts from offshore oil and gas drilling.

Names: Harris, Kamala D.

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