Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 6, 2002

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to let you know of our support for your recent action to protect coastal Florida and the Everglades from the threat of oil drilling and to respectfully urge you to take similar steps to preserve the coastal environment of California. We were heartened by your statements last week that acknowledged the economic value of a pristine environment and the importance of local opposition in Florida to new offshore drilling in the Administration's decision making process. We believe the same situation exists in California and want to encourage you to work with us to arrive at a similar outcome for the undeveloped leases off our coast.

As you know, many of us have written to you previously regarding our opposition to the development of the 36 leases off the coast of Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties. And Californians at the state and local level have long been outspoken in their strong bipartisan opposition to any new offshore oil development. For example, in 1994, the California legislature passed, and Governor Pete Wilson signed into law, a permanent ban on new leasing in state waters. In 1999, the State Assembly adopted a resolution requesting that the Federal Government enact a permanent ban on offshore oil drilling off the coast of California, including the existing undeveloped leases. And voters in both Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties have passed ballot measures requiring referenda before any new onshore developments relating to offshore oil and gas leasing are approved.

Also in 1999, Governor Gray Davis directed the State Resources Agency and the California Coastal Commission (CCC) to identify all legal and administrative actions available to the state to protect California's coastline from new drilling. In fact, the CCC is currently in litigation with MMS over the latter's actions regarding the 36 leases.

In 1969 a huge oil spill devastated the Santa Barbara coastline and gave rise to the modern environmental movement. A generation and countless worldwide spills later, the controversy around offshore oil drilling continues, especially off the California coast. The irony in this push for more oil drilling is that it is usually made under the guise of economic development and more jobs. Yet, oil drilling carries with it significant risks, not just to our environment, but to our local economy as well.

Tourism accounts for nearly $30 billion in annual revenue for California, and our stunningly beautiful coastline is in large part responsible for that. Tourism is one of the largest industries in Ventura, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo counties, and beautiful beaches, whale watching, and a preserved environment all play critical roles in bringing visitors to the area. Furthermore, many

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high-tech businesses -- which are increasingly important to the state's economy -- have relocated there because of the pristine environment and enviable quality of life. The beautiful setting of these counties is a selling point for businesses looking to relocate or expand and create new, high-paying jobs. New oil drilling -- with its accompanying dangers -- threatens this critically important part of our economy.

Furthermore, studies have shown that if we pumped out all the oil that may be off the California coast, it would barely make a dent in our national demand for energy. In contrast, oil spills wreak havoc on our state's economy -- when our coastal waters and beaches are spoiled, the tourism, recreation, and commercial fishing industries are irrevocably harmed. We must not gamble our economic viability and environmental integrity for a few days of oil. Our coastline and economy is just too important to allow this unnecessary drilling.

There have been a number of proposals to terminate the undeveloped leases off California, including swaps and buybacks. We urge you to work with us to develop a plan that recognizes Californian's express desire to remove the threat of more offshore oil drilling from the Central Coast.

Sincerely,

Lois Capps

Sam Farr

Randy Cunningham

Henry A. Waxman

George Miller

Lynn C. Woolsey

Barbara Lee

Hilda L. Solis

Bob Filner

Susan Davis

Jane Harman

Mike Thompson

Tom Lantos

Stephen Horn

Brad Sherman

Grace F. Napolitano

Loretta Sanchez

Joe Baca

Ellen O. Tauscher

Michael McNerney

Lucille Roybal-Allard

Nancy Pelosi

Pete Stark

Diane E. Watson

Robert J. Matsui

Adam Schiff

Howard L. Berman

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