

# OFFSHORE DRILLING

July 2018

## THE SITUATION



On January 4, 2018, the Department of the Interior published a first draft of their plan to open large swaths of America's oceans to offshore oil and gas leasing. The proposal would open waters in the Atlantic, Pacific, and Arctic oceans and new areas of the Gulf to drilling. The Trump administration has also proposed the removal of critical environmental and worker safety protections put in place after the Deepwater Horizon spill.

## WHY IS THIS A PROBLEM?

The Trump administration's plan would open more than 90 percent of the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) for leasing as part of the Republican agenda to support the fossil fuel industry at the expense of the American public. Their draft plan would expand oil and gas development along our coasts, all while the administration guts safety and environmental protections and decreases royalty rates paid by fossil fuel companies.

## WHY SHOULD AMERICANS CARE?

Oil and gas drilling poses threats to America's coastal communities and economies, many of which rely on fishing, tourism, and recreational activities to support local jobs. Efforts to weaken offshore drilling environmental and safety standards will put every coastal community in America at risk of environmental disaster and do nothing to decrease the price of energy for everyday Americans.

## 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.

## THE FACTS

The public is opposed to more offshore drilling. **60%** of Americans oppose allowing more offshore oil and gas drilling in U.S. waters (Pew Research Center, 2018).

**15** bipartisan governors from coastal states wrote letters in opposition to Trump's drill-everywhere plan

## WHAT'S CONGRESS DOING?

The Republican Congress has conducted zero oversight and has sat on its hands and permitted the Trump administration to rescind numerous safety and environmental regulations.



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 attempted to open nearly all our nation's waters to offshore drilling while limiting oversight and protections. Some House Republicans even want to go further, charging a fee to states that want to limit drilling, essentially holding the safety of their coastal environments for ransom.

## HOW DO WE MOVE FORWARD?

Ranking Member Grijalva and 31 House Democratic cosponsors introduced the Sustainable Energy Development Reform Act. The bill provides new protections for our oceans, strengthens environmental and safety standards for offshore drilling, and directs funding to the protection, maintenance, and restoration of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes ecosystems.