

PRESS RELEASE

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Environment America Outraged at Offshore Drilling Announcement

Today, the Obama Administration unveiled a proposal to open vast expanses of the Atlantic coastline, Gulf of Mexico, and the Northern coast of Alaska to new offshore drilling.

“Environment America is outraged that this administration will substantially increase offshore oil drilling,” said Anna Aurilio, Director of the DC Office of Environment America. “There is no need to threaten our beaches, wildlife and tourism with oil spills and pollution when we have much better solutions -- putting cleaner cars on the road today that will dramatically cut oil consumption; shifting to plug-in cars powered by the wind and the sun that use little to no oil and investing more in public transportation,” she said.

Offshore drilling risks catastrophic damage and chronic pollution to our nation’s oceans and beaches (report <<http://www.environmentamerica.org/home/reports/report-archives/ocean-conservation/ocean-conservation/oceans-under-the-gun-living-seas-or-drilling-seas#idDE88aglFnpScAOxy9Q9YtA>>):

- In August 2009 a new, state-of-the-art rig off the Australian coast spilled an estimated 9 million gallons of oil, nearly the size of the Exxon Valdez spill;
- The new proposal jeopardizes beaches on much of the East Coast including the Chesapeake Bay, Cape Hatteras National Seashore and parks, and Hilton Head;
- Drilling endangers tourism as well as commercial and recreational fishing, which employ over 4 million people around the country and generated almost \$51 billion in Florida and the mid- and South- Atlantic alone in 2008;
- Drilling in the Atlantic threatens calving grounds for the rare Northern right whale, endangered sea turtles and their nesting grounds, deep coral reefs, manatees, migration paths for numerous other whales and dolphins, and many more.

“Drilling for oil and gas is still a dirty and dangerous business. Opening much of the Atlantic coast to drilling will threaten the last remaining Northern right whales, endangered sea turtles

and vibrant tourism economies from Delaware to Florida,” Anna said.

There is not enough offshore oil to significantly decrease dependency or lower prices, and better solutions exist with current technology:

- At best, new offshore drilling could meet a tiny fraction of U.S. daily consumption;
- President Obama’s increase in the national fuel economy standards expected tomorrow will reduce gasoline consumption by as much as 11.6 billion gallons per year in 2016, saving consumers up to \$31.8 billion annually by that year (report <http://www.environmentamerica.org/home/reports/report-archives/global-warming-solutions/global-warming-solutions/plug-in-cars-powering-america-toward-a-cleaner-future>).
- Powering three-quarters of U.S. cars, pick-up trucks, SUVs and vans with electricity could cut oil imports in half, ultimately replacing that oil with electricity from clean, renewable sources like wind and solar (report <http://www.environmentamerica.org/home/reports/report-archives/global-warming-solutions/global-warming-solutions/plug-in-cars-powering-america-toward-a-cleaner-future>).

“At a time when we need to tackle both our dependence on oil and the threat of global warming pollution, this proposal takes us backward. More offshore drilling means more oil consumption and more global warming pollution,” Anna said.

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Environment America is a federation of state-based, citizen funded environmental groups working for clean air, clean water, and open space. www.environmentamerica.org
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