



July 20, 2010

Honorable Barbara Boxer  
Chair, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works  
112 Hart Building  
Washington, DC 20510-3553  
Fax: (202) 224-0454

**RE: Support for S. 3358 – West Coast Ocean Protection Act of 2010**

Dear Chairwoman Boxer:

The Environmental Defense Center (EDC), on behalf of its more than 2,000 members, would like to express our strong support for the West Coast Protection Act of 2010, legislation that would protect our precious coastal resources from the untenable risks associated with off-shore oil production.

The EDC is a non-profit, public interest law firm that has worked to protect California's natural resources, coast and ocean for more than 30 years. The EDC's mission is to protect and enhance the environment through education, advocacy and legal action. Working primarily in Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, and Ventura counties, the EDC represents dozens of non-profit organizations within this region and beyond.

As the unfortunate victims of one of the nation's first major offshore oil spills—the 1969 Santa Barbara Oil Spill—our community is well aware of the devastating risks inherent in offshore oil production. Yet, as millions of gallons have spilled in the Gulf of Mexico, amounting to what President Obama referred to as “the worst environmental disaster America has ever faced,”<sup>1</sup> we are reminded of the dangers that drilling presents to our own coast and the regrettable lack of permanent federal protections against further development.

Enactment of S. 3358 would ensure that future generations need not fear the potential for another environmental disaster that accompanies further development of the Pacific Outer Continental Shelf. The EDC was pleased that California, along with its neighbors to the north, was omitted from both the current federal 5-year leasing plan and the proposed 5-year plan set to

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<sup>1</sup> June 15, 2010 Presidential address from the Oval Office.

begin in 2012, and we urge you and your colleagues to cement these protections in law with the passage of the West Coast Ocean Protection Act.

As a leader in coastal protection, California has made it abundantly clear it does not want oil production off its coast. Over the years since 1969, our State has opposed new Federal leasing and prevented any further State leasing. Despite this fact, the Federal Government continued to allow for the development of oil and gas leases beyond the state's jurisdiction—a practice it could easily take up again. Please help protect our precious coastline from the horrors of offshore oil by actively pursuing passage of this crucial piece of legislation. Our coastal resources are too valuable, and our future generations too important, not to.

The EDC thanks you for your continued leadership on this important issue, and for considering our comments. Please feel free to contact us if we can answer any questions or provide additional information.

Sincerely,



Linda Krop  
Chief Counsel

cc:

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Senator Maria Cantwell; Fax: (206) 220-6404  
Senator Richard Durbin; Fax: (312) 353-0150  
Senator Jeff Merkley; Fax: (503) 326-2900  
Senator Patty Murray; Fax: (206) 553-0891  
Senator Ron Wyden; Fax: (202) 228-2717  
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