



EDC STATEMENT RE GULF OF MEXICO OIL SPILL – 4/29/10

The oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico is a tragic reminder of the risks inherent with offshore oil and gas development. For the community of Santa Barbara, this spill invokes memories from 1969, when a platform blow-out spewed three million gallons of oil into the ocean and onto our beaches.

Our thoughts and sympathies go out to the Gulf communities and families affected by the oil spill. We watch with trepidation each day as we observe the expanded scope and impact of the spill.

The Gulf spill serves as a reminder that oil spills will happen so long as we have offshore oil and gas development. Spills can be caused by human error, natural disaster, and technical failures.

Similar to the Gulf, we in Santa Barbara County live with the threat of an oil spill every day. There are 27 platforms operating offshore California, 20 of which are located in the Santa Barbara Channel. These projects have no end dates. Once they begin producing oil and gas, they can operate off our coast indefinitely.

The threat of ongoing oil development, re-affirmed by the tragic spill in the Gulf, highlights the importance of the recent agreement negotiated by EDC and our clients to put an end to existing oil development that currently occurs offshore Northern Santa Barbara County. Our clients, Get Oil Out! and Citizens Planning Association, have fought to protect our coast from offshore oil development ever since the 1969 Santa Barbara spill.

This agreement, known as the Tranquillon Ridge plan, is the **only** means available to shut down existing drilling offshore California. The plan would impose an end date for drilling that currently occurs from four platforms. Absent our settlement agreement, there is no legal mechanism to shut down these existing operations, which will continue indefinitely. No new oil platforms will be built under this plan. Instead, existing oil platforms will be shut down – three in 9 years and one in 14 years. In addition, the onshore infrastructure that supports these platforms will be dismantled and removed. As a result, this infrastructure will no longer be available to support new offshore oil leasing and development in the future.

EDC and our clients have fought for years to prevent new offshore oil leasing and development. In 2005, we successfully blocked the extension of 36 federal oil leases offshore Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. We continue to respond to other threats in our community as well, including Venoco's proposal to construct a new drilling rig on the coast in Carpinteria to tap into existing offshore state leases. We are also fighting Venoco's plan to expand drilling from Platform Holly near Goleta.

The Tranquillon Ridge plan provides our only hope of shutting down **existing** oil operations that continue to threaten our coast. That's why environmental leaders including Congresswoman Lois Capps strongly support this agreement. Please see www.EnvironmentalDefenseCenter.org for more information about the Tranquillon Ridge plan.

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