



PRESS RELEASE

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ENVIRONMENTALISTS SUPPORT STATE RECONSIDERATION OF PLAN TO END OIL DRILLING

Governor's Budget Proposal Would Preserve Existing Requirement for State Lands Commission Approval of Tranquillon Ridge Proposal

SANTA BARBARA, CA. The Environmental Defense Center was joined today by other environmental groups in supporting reconsideration of the Tranquillon Ridge proposal by the California State Lands Commission. The EDC, along with Get Oil Out! and Citizens Planning Association of Santa Barbara County, negotiated an historic agreement with Plains Exploration and Production ("PXP") that would have shut down existing oil drilling operations at four platforms offshore Santa Barbara County. Although the project was approved by the County of Santa Barbara and supported by environmental groups throughout the state, it was subsequently rejected by the State Lands Commission amidst questions regarding enforceability of the end dates. EDC is confident that these concerns will be addressed in a hearing for reconsideration by the Commission.

"We look forward to the opportunity to have this project reconsidered by the State Lands Commission," said Linda Krop, Chief Counsel for the EDC, a public interest environmental law firm that has been a leader in fighting offshore oil in California for more than 30 years. "The only reason we support the Tranquillon Ridge project is because it would put an end to offshore oil drilling. We are not opening the door; we are closing the door to drilling off our coast." As Krop noted, "The fact of the matter is that PXP is already drilling from four platforms off our coast, and can continue drilling indefinitely. With the Tranquillon Ridge plan, we will finally secure an end date to this drilling."

The EDC expressed its appreciation that the Governor's budget proposal that was released today, while anticipating state royalty revenue from the Tranquillon Ridge project, also acknowledged that the project would have to first be approved by the State Lands Commission.

"Reconsideration by the State Lands Commission is the only process that we support to address this unique proposal. We continue to strongly oppose any legislative proposals that would circumvent the important role of the State Lands Commission in protecting our coast," said Krop.

EDC and its clients have successfully opposed new oil leasing and drilling offshore California for decades. In 1999, EDC crafted the successful legal challenge to 36 federal oil leases offshore Santa Barbara, Ventura and San Luis Obispo Counties. Although EDC and others have been able to thwart efforts to expand oil leasing and drilling off our coast, the Tranquillon Ridge project presents the first opportunity to terminate *existing* oil drilling, thereby putting an end to the ongoing impacts and risks of oil spills along California's biologically rich central coast.

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The Environmental Defense Center protects and enhances the local environment through education, advocacy, and legal action and works primarily within Santa Barbara, Ventura and San Luis Obispo counties. Since 1977, EDC has empowered community based organizations to advance environmental protection. Program areas include protecting coast and ocean resources, open spaces and wildlife, and human and environmental health.

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