



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS OPPOSE SANTA BARBARA COUNTY OFFSHORE DRILLING PROPOSAL**

SANTA BARBARA, CA...Four major local environmental groups, (EDC, CEC, GOO! and SBCAN), together representing more than 120 years of activism to protect the quality of Santa Barbara County's environment, joined together today to express their opposition to a proposed letter from Santa Barbara County to Governor Schwarzenegger, favoring increased oil exploration and extraction offshore California.

"Only a year ago, this same Board reaffirmed our County's long-standing support of the Federal leasing moratorium," said Linda Krop, Chief Counsel for the **Environmental Defense Center** (EDC), which has led the legal fight against oil drilling in the Santa Barbara Channel for more than thirty years. "And only a month ago the Governor, to whom this letter is addressed, said clearly that he continues to support the moratorium. This action is not about the interests of Santa Barbara or California, but about rhetoric and positioning in a national political campaign. The future of Santa Barbara should not be sacrificed for a good campaign sound bite, especially for a policy which will have little or no impact on gas prices or reducing imports of foreign oil."

"The suggestion that somehow drilling for oil will be good for our environment by reducing oil and gas seeps is simply bad science," said Abraham Powell, President of **Get Oil Out!** (GOO!), also formed just months after the 1969 spill. "Even the authors of the one study that suggested this might be possible have repudiated its use." GOO! has produced a fact sheet called "Offshore Seeps: The Facts," that is attached to this release. GOO! warned the Board that further oil drilling will not only result in local impacts, but will also exacerbate global climate change.

The proposed letter credits increased oil development as providing a beneficial impact on our state and local budgetary crisis. However, "[e]ven the federal Energy Information Administration says that increased drilling will have an 'insignificant' impact on oil prices, even by 2030," said Tam Hunt, Energy Program Director for the **Community Environmental Council** (CEC), which was formed in 1970 in response to the 1969 Santa Barbara oil spill. "Our nation should be investing our time, energy and creativity into real solutions that put us on the right path,

toward renewable energy solutions for our future. Our region shouldn't be known for chasing after yesterday's energy solutions, but for leadership toward the renewable energy solutions of today and tomorrow.”

“The Board report, signed by Supervisors Firestone and Centeno, talks mostly about the possibility of increased property tax revenue from more offshore leases,” said Deborah Brasket, Executive Director of **Santa Barbara County Action Network** (SBCAN). “But the local economic impact of another oil spill on tourism, fishing, and other ocean dependent industries in our communities, would be devastating and would cause much more significant harm than some speculative income in yet unknown leases. Off-shore oil drilling is not the panacea touted by the oil industry, but yet another ploy to prolong our dependence on oil, and delay the development of renewable energy.”

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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.*

*Get Oil Out! is a non-profit corporation whose mission is to protect the natural environment and beauty of the Santa Barbara Channel from the adverse effects of oil development.*

*The CEC is an environmental nonprofit focused exclusively on energy efficiency and renewables, alternative transportation, and climate change. We work from grassroots to policy levels to help community members reduce their carbon footprint and to end our region's dependency on fossil fuels to become 'Fossil Free by 2033'.*

*Santa Barbara County Action Network is a non-profit corporation that works to promote social and economic justice, to preserve our environmental and agricultural resources, and to create sustainable communities. SB CAN advocates a holistic approach to community planning that integrates housing, open space, and transportation to meet the needs of all members of our community and future generations.*