



PRESS RELEASE

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SANTA BARBARA CITY COUNCIL VOTES TO SUPPORT OIL MORATORIUM

Santa Barbara, CA: Last night the Santa Barbara City Council voted to support the federal moratorium on offshore oil leasing. On a 5-1 vote, with the seventh member of the Council submitting a note in favor of the moratorium, the Council reaffirmed its longstanding opposition to oil development offshore of Santa Barbara. Several Council members expressed the urgency and import of their vote in light of the pending Congressional debate on the issue and the media attention given to the County Supervisors' vote two weeks ago asking Governor Schwarzenegger to support new oil development offshore Santa Barbara.

As noted in the Memorandum presented to the Council by Mayor Marty Blum and Councilmembers Helene Schneider and Das Williams,

The national media surrounding the August 26, 2008 Board of Supervisors 3-2 vote reversing the County's position that supported the continuation of the federal moratorium on new oil and gas leases in federal waters makes it necessary for the City of Santa Barbara to re-emphasize its commitment to energy independence and support of the federal moratorium on new oil exploration, drilling and production in the Santa Barbara Channel.

The resolution adopted by the Council notes that "the City of Santa Barbara is the site of the devastating oil spill of 1969 that led to the forming of the modern environmental movement and Earth Day worldwide." Santa Barbara based Environmental Defense Center staff attorney Nathan Alley pointed out that the 1969 oil spill first led to new laws requiring the federal government to develop 5-Year Lease Plans and then to the first Congressional moratorium in 1982.

The resolution also points out that "City of Santa Barbara residents have long opposed new oil and gas drilling off their coastline." The Council read from a six-page memo listing 52 resolutions passed by the City since 1974, opposing offshore oil development and supporting various state and federal moratoria and other actions.

“The City’s vote sends a strong message to Congress that Santa Barbara remains steadfastly in support of the federal oil moratorium,” said Linda Krop, Chief Counsel of the Environmental Defense Center. “Santa Barbara is on the record once more as standing up for coastal protection and a clean energy plan for the future.”

The resolution will be sent to Senators Boxer and Feinstein, Congressman Capps, Governor Schwarzenegger, Assemblymember Nava, State Senator McClintock and the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors.

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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.