

West Coast Ocean Protection Act

Current Cosponsors: Sens. Schiff, Whitehouse, Booker, Wyden, Merkley, Murray, Sanders, Markey, and Cantwell

California began efforts to block offshore drilling in 1969 when an oil rig off the coast of Santa Barbara leaked 3 million gallons of crude oil into the ocean, blanketing beaches with a thick layer of oil and killing thousands of marine mammals and birds. It was the largest oil spill in U.S. history until the Exxon Valdez spill in Alaska 20 years later. Offshore drilling is a risky business because it can have devastating impacts on oceans, coastal communities, and wildlife.

In an effort to protect the West Coast Ocean and ensure that our federal waters are not for sale, Congressional action is needed to prioritize communities over the profits of fossil fuel companies. If urgent action is not taken, oil spills will continue occurring with more frequency and the environmental impact will be devastating, not just for the West, but for the country and world at large.

What the *West Coast Ocean Protection Act* would do:

- Amend the *Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act of 1978* to permanently prohibit offshore drilling on the outer continental shelf off the coast of California, Oregon, and Washington.

Why is this bill necessary?

- As natural disasters across the country continue to increase, swift action is needed to ensure that the West Coast cannot be opened to new drilling that would bring about more disasters. This bill will safeguard initiatives to protect coastal communities and ensure that offshore drilling does not cause further damage.
- The message is clear: we must act now to fulfill the promises we have made to our children, our constituents, and our colleagues that we will act boldly to meet the urgency of this ongoing crisis.