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COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

June 11, 2013

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Chairman Doc Hastings
House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Edward J. Markey
House Committee on Natural Resources
1329 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Hastings and Ranking Member Markey,

I write in strong opposition to the Offshore Energy and Jobs Act currently being considered by your committee.

This proposed legislation mandates immediate oil and gas lease sales off the coasts of my district in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties, despite the communities' well-known, long standing bipartisan opposition to new drilling in these areas. Santa Barbara's devastating 1969 oil spill galvanized Central Coast residents, and virtually the whole state, against more offshore drilling. We were outraged by the damage to the environment and wildlife. And we understood the havoc that similar blowouts would wreak on our economy—especially tourism and fishing, and related industries. That's why Californians led the fight to pass groundbreaking environmental laws like the National Environmental Policy Act and Coastal Zone Management Act to protect our coastline and communities from the devastation that the 1969 oil spill brought to Santa Barbara.

The Offshore Energy and Jobs Act puts the Central Coast at risk again by requiring an offshore lease sale in the Santa Maria, Santa Barbara and Ventura Basins by the end of next year. To make matters worse, the bill would also prevent proper environmental review of these lease sales by requiring a single multi-sale environmental impact statement that covers lease sales off both the West and East Coasts. Such EIS documents are usually done only for lease sales in areas like the Gulf of Mexico, where the conditions are well known and similar. Furthermore, this legislation would do nothing to implement key safety reforms recommended by the BP Spill Commission and others, including increasing the spill liability cap and codifying the safety reforms already put in place.

Mandating destructive drilling in communities that do not want it, while cutting out proper environmental reviews might be good policy for oil companies, but it is bad policy for my constituents and it is bad energy policy for our nation. The Offshore Energy and Jobs Act is misguided and unnecessary, and I strongly oppose it.

Sincerely,

LOIS CAPPS
Member of Congress