

Audubon • California Coastal Protection Network • Clean Ocean Action •
Defenders of Wildlife • Environment California • Friends of the Earth •
Greenpeace USA • National Environmental Trust • National OCS Coalition •
Natural Resources Defense Council • Northcoast Environmental Center •
Ocean Champions • Public Citizen • Reef Relief • Sierra Club •
The Wilderness Society • U.S. PIRG

April 4, 2006

Dear Senator:

We, the undersigned environmental organizations, urge you to protect America's Gulf coast and oppose S. 2253, sponsored by Senators Pete Domenici and Jeff Bingaman. The Domenici-Bingaman bill would allow oil and gas leasing and drilling in millions of acres off of Florida's Gulf coast in an area known as Lease Sale 181.

Floridians strongly oppose oil and gas drilling off of their coasts. A diverse coalition of elected officials, chambers of commerce, large and small businesses, and environmental and citizens groups in Florida oppose drilling because of the threat it poses to Florida's world famous marine waters and pristine beaches.

Florida's coast is a complex mosaic of sea grasses, wetlands, bays, estuary systems, beaches and dunes, and offshore drilling is simply not compatible with the quality of life and economy this fragile ecosystem supports. That is why both Florida senators, Senators Martinez and Nelson, are opposed to S. 2253.

Finally, there is not much oil and natural gas thought to be in the eastern Gulf of Mexico. At current rates of consumption, Florida's coast probably contains less than four months of oil and only six month's worth of natural gas.

Obviously, we cannot drill our way out of our energy problems. There is simply not enough oil and natural gas off of Florida's Gulf coast, certainly not enough to reduce prices or make America energy independent.

We strongly urge you to vigorously oppose - and not sign on as a cosponsor - S. 2253, the Domenici-Bingaman bill, and oppose any attempt to lift the moratorium for offshore drilling off of our coasts. Instead of promoting drilling projects that harm our coasts and do nothing to solve our energy problems, we urge you to support energy projects that promote energy efficiency and renewable energy.

John Flicker
President
Audubon

DeeVon Quirolo
Executive Director
Reef Relief

Susan Jordan
Director
California Coastal Protection Network

Carl Pope
Executive Director
Sierra Club

Cindy Zipf
Executive Director
Clean Ocean Action

William A. Meadows
President
The Wilderness Society

Rodger Schlickeisen
President
Defenders of Wildlife

Anna Aurilio
Acting Executive Director
U.S. PIRG

Dan Jacobson
Director
Environment California

Brent Blackwelder
President
Friends of the Earth

John Passacantando
Executive Director
Greenpeace USA

Philip E. Clapp
President
National Environmental Trust

Richard Charter
Co-Chair
National OCS Coalition

Frances G. Beinecke
President
Natural Resources Defense Council

Tim McKay
Executive Director
Northwest Environmental Center