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AJR-29 Oil and gas: offshore drilling: operations: leases. (2017-2018)

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Assembly Joint Resolution No. 29

CHAPTER 19

Relative to new Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas operations in federal waters offshore California.

[Filed with Secretary of State March 07, 2018.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AJR 29, Limón. Oil and gas: offshore drilling: operations: leases.

This measure would provide that the Legislature strongly and unequivocally supports the current federal prohibition on new oil and gas drilling in federal waters offshore California, opposes the Trump administration's proposal to remove safety and environmental protections related to offshore drilling operations, and opposes the Trump administration's proposed leasing plan that would expose the state to new offshore drilling. The measure would also urge the United States Secretary of the Interior to remove California from that proposed leasing plan, and would request that the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management hold more than one public hearing on the plan in the State of California to ensure that all Californians have an opportunity to have their voices heard.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, California's iconic coastal and marine waters are one of our state's most precious resources and, as elected officials, it is our duty to ensure the long-term viability of California's fish and wildlife resources and thriving fishing, tourism, and recreation sectors; and

WHEREAS, There are renewed calls for opening offshore areas for drilling and for lifting moratoriums on energy production in federal areas, which could lead to more oil spills, increased dependence on fossil fuels, and significant negative impacts on the state's economy; and

WHEREAS, There have been no new offshore oil and gas leases in California since the 1969 blowout of a well in federal waters that sent an estimated three million gallons of crude oil into the Pacific Ocean near the County of Santa Barbara's coastline, devastating wildlife, marine ecosystems, and tourism, and igniting the modern-day environmental movement; and

WHEREAS, Major spills have continued to occur along the California coast, including the 2015 Refugio oil spill, which spilled approximately 140,000 gallons of heavy crude oil along the Gaviota coast in the County of Santa Barbara; and

WHEREAS, Beginning in 1921, and many times since, the Legislature has enacted laws that withdrew certain offshore areas from oil and gas leasing and, by 1989, the state's offshore oil and gas leasing moratorium was in place; and

WHEREAS, In 1994, the Legislature made findings in Assembly Bill 2444 (Chapter 970 of the Statutes of 1994) that offshore oil and gas production in certain areas of state waters poses an unacceptably high risk of damage and disruption to the state's marine environment; and

WHEREAS, In the same act, the Legislature enacted the California Coastal Sanctuary Act of 1994, which included all of the state's unleased waters subject to tidal influence and prohibited new oil and gas leases in the sanctuary, unless the President of the United States finds a severe energy supply interruption and has ordered distribution of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, the Governor finds that the energy resources of the sanctuary will contribute significantly to alleviating that interruption, and the Legislature subsequently amends the act to allow such a lease; and

WHEREAS, Section 18 of the federal Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1331 et seq.) requires the preparation of a nationwide offshore oil and gas leasing program setting a five-year schedule of lease sales implemented by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management within the United States Department of the Interior; and

WHEREAS, Consistent with the principles of Section 18 and the resulting regionally tailored leasing strategy, the current exclusion of the Pacific Outer Continental Shelf from new oil and gas development is consistent with the long-standing interests of Pacific Coast states, as framed in the 2006 West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health adopted by the Governors of California, Washington, and Oregon; and

WHEREAS, In November 2016, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management released a final 2017–22 leasing program that continues the moratorium on oil and gas leasing in the undeveloped areas of the Pacific Outer Continental Shelf; and

WHEREAS, Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr., in December 2016, requested that then President Obama permanently withdraw California's Outer Continental Shelf from new oil and gas leasing, and, along with previous California governors, has united with the Governors of Oregon and Washington in an effort to commit to developing robust renewable energy sources to reduce our dependence on fossil fuel and help us reach our carbon emission goals; and

WHEREAS, The Legislature has led the nation with its landmark climate change legislation, ambitiously requiring that statewide greenhouse gas emissions be reduced to at least 40 percent below their 1990 level by 2030, and achieving a renewables portfolio standard of 50 percent by 2030; California must lead the nation in fostering the transition away from offshore fossil fuel production to protect both our climate and oceans from the damaging impacts of climate change, which will affect all life on earth for generations to come; and

WHEREAS, The Trump administration has proposed a five-year leasing plan that would commit 90 percent of the nation's offshore reserves to leasing, including two new leases each for northern, central, and southern California in areas that have been off limits to oil and gas exploration since the Reagan administration; and

WHEREAS, The Trump administration has proposed reversing critical offshore drilling safety regulations promulgated after the 2010 Deepwater Horizon offshore oil rig disaster; and

WHEREAS, The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management has proposed only one public hearing on the proposed leasing plan in the State of California despite the significant impacts of that proposal on northern, central, and southern California; and

WHEREAS, The Trump administration is considering removing the State of Florida from that proposal due to the proposal's potential negative impacts on tourism; and

WHEREAS, According to the National Ocean Economic Program, in 2014, California's coastal economy employed 15.8 million people, generated approximately \$2.1 trillion, and created an estimated 85 percent of California's gross domestic product; accordingly, California's economy is roughly three times the size of Florida's economy and California's coastal counties generate more than three times as much revenue as Florida's coastal counties; and

WHEREAS, Hundreds of millions of California residents and visitors enjoy the state's ocean and coast for recreation, exploration, and tourism, generating nearly \$20 billion and collectively comprising the largest sector of the state's \$44 billion ocean economy; and

WHEREAS, The Legislature considers new oil and gas offshore drilling and any reversal of associated safety regulations to be threats to the nation's economy, national security, and the state's ambitious renewable energy goals; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of California, jointly, That the Legislature strongly and unequivocally supports the current federal prohibition on new oil and gas drilling in federal waters offshore California, opposes attempts to modify the prohibition, and will consider any appropriate actions to maintain the prohibition; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature strongly and unequivocally opposes the Trump administration's proposal to remove safety and environmental protections related to offshore drilling operations; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature requests that the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management hold additional public hearings on the proposed leasing plan in the State of California to ensure that all Californians have an opportunity to have their voices heard; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature further strongly and unequivocally opposes the Trump administration's proposed leasing plan, which would expose the state to new offshore drilling, and urges United States Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke to remove California from the plan; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, to the Governor of California, to the Majority and Minority Leaders of the United States Senate, to the Speaker and Minority Leader of the United States House of Representatives, to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States, to the Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior, to the Director of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, and to each member of the California State Senate and Assembly.