

# Offshore Fracking

## Protecting California's Coast

**O**il companies are fracking wells off the coast of California. This latest craze uses toxic chemicals at high pressures with drilling to force oil out of difficult to get spots. Some of the chemicals rush back to the surface with produced water and some offshore oil platforms are permitted to dump that stuff into the ocean. Offshore fracking poses unacceptable risks for public health, the climate and the environment. This toxic practice is happening in some of California's most biologically sensitive areas, and it places at risk marine ecosystems and the people and wildlife that depend on them.

### What the California Coastal Commission Can Do to Prevent Fracking

Call on the California Coastal Commission to halt risky offshore fracking. We want the Commission to take the following steps to protect California's ocean and beaches.

- **Require oil companies to obtain coastal development permits for fracking in state waters.**
- **Require review of all offshore oil and gas fracking activities in federal waters off California to ensure consistency with coastal protection.**
- **Issue guidance to local governments to amend their coastal programs to prevent fracking that threatens coastal waters.**

The Coastal Commission is charged with protecting California's coastal resources, and this means preserving wildlife, marine fisheries, and the natural environment. Under its broad mandate, the Commission has the duty and authority to prevent offshore fracking that threatens California's coast.

### Risks of Offshore Fracking

**Water pollution:** Offshore fracking uses toxic chemicals in some of California's most biologically sensitive areas. Approximately half the oil platforms in federal waters in the Santa Barbara Channel discharge all or a portion of their wastewater—which could include fracking chemicals—directly to the ocean, according to a California Coastal Commission document. A recent analysis of 12 frack jobs in state waters found that at least one-third of chemicals used are suspected ecological hazards, and more than a third of these chemicals are suspected of affecting human developmental and nervous systems. Water pollution threatens endangered species and wildlife habitat.

**Air pollution and climate impacts:** Oil and gas operations generate significant air pollutants that are known to have human health impacts, and can also threaten marine life. Offshore fracking intensifies these operations and can lead to increases in harmful air pollutants as well as significant greenhouse gas pollution. Fracking our oceans for dirty fossil fuels will contribute to climate change.

**Oil spills and earthquakes:** Fracking extends the life of old oil and gas operations that should be retired. High pressures and new drilling on aging infrastructure increases the chances of a well failure or oil spill. Additionally, fracking has been linked to earthquakes in some regions.

In light of these risks, the Coastal Commission must consider the impacts of offshore fracking on the coastal zone and marine environment. Accordingly, the Commission should prevent fracking in state waters and object to fracking proposals in federal waters. The best way to protect the California coast and its resources is to halt offshore fracking altogether.

For more information: <http://bit.ly/1fLEO8z>

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