

TALKING POINTS FOR BOEM COMMENTS

The fundamental point to make, of course, is to express complete opposition to any fossil fuel development off Oregon's coast, stating firmly that for both ecological and economic reasons, a healthy marine environment is far more important to Oregon than any short-term profits that might be gained by energy corporations. Personalize your comments as much as possible, explaining why the ocean and coast are important to you, and how an oil spill could affect you and your community.

Some specific points to consider:

*Estimates of the total contribution to Oregon's coastal economy of fishing, recreation, and tourism vary, but start at \$2 billion and go up from there. The exact value of oil and gas that might be extracted from the continental shelf off Oregon can't be known, as it would depend on the amount actually obtained and the market at the time it was sold. Whatever profit might be gained would go to out-of-state corporations, and must be weighed against the \$2 billion-plus that would be largely lost to Oregon coastal communities *every year*, for many years to come, in the event of a major oil spill.

*Disaster is all too likely. The Pacific Northwest coast is one of the highest-energy nearshore marine systems on the planet, with very high waves and strong storms, both of which are increasing in size. Addressing an oil spill would be challenging at any time of year, and from fall through spring a near-impossibility. The risk is compounded by the likelihood of a major tectonic earthquake in the region in coming decades, which could destroy platforms, pipelines, and onshore infrastructure.

*Short of a major disaster, the visual pollution of ocean views, and the impacts of the development of drilling infrastructure onshore, could seriously erode the tourism industry on which the coast depends.

*Oregon has worked hard for more than a decade to establish, manage, and do research in a system of marine reserves, which both preserve habitat and provide opportunities to measure changing ocean conditions and the impact of management decisions. This key state priority in marine planning and management would be destroyed by the impacts of oil development.

*An oil spill would have devastating effects on ocean fisheries. If oil reached estuaries it could destroy salmon and depress both ocean and river fisheries for many years to come.

*Aside from the possibility of an oil spill, exploration and infrastructure development have impacts. Airguns used in exploration are apparently capable of emitting sounds with amplitudes up to 250 or 260 dB. This is far higher than the marine mammal acoustic thresholds in NMFS' new guidance protecting marine mammals from temporary or permanent hearing loss.

Oil platforms and vessels servicing them would intrude on gray whale migration routes. Onshore development of fossil fuel facilities would violate Oregon's goals for coastal management as embodied in the state's Coastal Management Program.

*All this for a possible 810 million barrels of oil, approximately one-ninetieth of the amount estimated to be in the Gulf of Mexico. This is enough to meet U.S. needs for approximately 20 days. The amount of gas that might be found is estimated to be enough to power the U.S. for a month. But that is only a poorly founded guess on the part of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management—the amounts could be far less, but a lot of damage would have been done before that was discovered. Oregon's marine environment, fisheries, and marine reserves shouldn't be put at grave risk so as to delay our reckoning with the end of fossil fuels by a month. And those figures of possible oil and gas reserves are for both Oregon and Washington—to the economic cost of a drilling disaster must be added the value of that state's coastal businesses and fisheries as well.

*The world ocean is under assault from global warming. The ocean is the major heat sink of this planet and is warming steadily. The coastal ocean is already showing present degradation of circulation, deeper thermocline development, and acidification from higher CO2 levels. Global warming is largely due to the use of fossil fuels; this action will only serve to further degrade the ocean just to make a few rich people richer. By the time production from Oregon's ocean could come online, we should have moved dramatically away from fossil fuels, rendering this plan obsolete and the impacts of exploration and infrastructure development a complete waste of time and resources.