

**Testimony of Supervisor Terra Lawson-Remer
District 3, San Diego County**

**House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources
Legislative Hearing on Offshore Drilling
May 13, 2021**

Chair Lowenthal, Ranking Member Stauber, Congressman Levin, members of the subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today in enthusiastic support of Congressman Levin's H.R. 3053, The American Coasts and Oceans Protection Act, as well as the five other coastal protection bills now under consideration.

My name is Terra Lawson-Remer and it's my honor to serve as the Supervisor of San Diego County's 3rd District. I represent some of the same coastal communities as Congressman Levin and I share his determination to protect our coast and our constituents from the threat of offshore drilling and our dangerous dependence on fossil fuels.

While we are relieved to have a new federal administration, less beholden to the oil and gas industry, it is clear that we must permanently protect our federal waters from oil exploitation.

California is not a state that needs to learn its lesson twice. The blowout of Union Oil's Platform A off the coast of Santa Barbara in 1969 halted all new oil leasing in California state waters. The ravages of Exxon Valdez and Deepwater Horizon are more than enough to compel us to do the same in federal waters.

To Californians, our coast is not just essential to our economy. Yes, it provides us with valuable jobs, profits, and public revenue from tourism, recreation, commercial and sports fisheries, and seafood. But it is far, far more than that. The coast is at the core of our collective identity. We identify with our coast—with our beaches, with our kelp forests and sea life, with the vast Pacific—and we will fight ferociously to protect it.

Offshore drilling threatens what we hold sacred. Our marine protected areas and marine sanctuaries: the Farallons, Monterey Bay, Morro Bay, Bodega Bay, the Channel Islands, Point Reyes, Point Conception, Carmel, Big Sur, Laguna Beach, Dana Point. The protected waters of the communities Congressman Levin and I share, Swami's, San Diego-Scripps, Matlahuayl. You're threatening the breaks that I've surfed since childhood: Beacons, Pipes, Blacks, Little Point, Windansea, Bird Rock, Calumet. Offshoring drilling threatens what we love. Who we are.

There are many reasons to ban oil extraction in federal waters. The most profound, however, is the necessity of rapidly ending the extraction, processing, and consumption of fossil fuels. Period. The Biden Administration has committed to a 50% reduction in net greenhouse gas pollution in the next 10 years. Governor Newsom has committed to banning all new fracking permits by 2024 and ending the sale of gasoline-fueled vehicles by 2035. Senator De León's SB

100 committed our state to 100% zero carbon energy by 2045. My own County of San Diego has set an ambitious target of zero carbon by 2035.

These targets are well within our technical capacity. We can do this. The cost of solar energy has plummeted 89% in the last decade alone. We already have clear paths to 100% renewable energy. In the very near future, renewable energy WITH STORAGE will be significantly cheaper than combined cycle natural gas.

It is preposterous, in this context, that anyone would consider expanding offshore oil and gas development. Any livable climate future will require a rapid draw-down of fossil fuel production and consumption, and any additional offshore development will prevent us from keeping global warming below 2 degrees Celsius.

The supposed profitability of oil and gas is almost exclusively the result of failing to price the externalities of the fossil fuel industry, and forcing us, our children, our grandchildren, and the global ecosystem to bear its true costs.

If we were appropriately internalizing the climate and health consequences of fossil fuel combustion, the oil and gas industry would be trillions of dollars in the hole. Think of the costs imposed by drought, fire, famine, flooding, extreme heat events, sea level rise, desertification, disease, displacement, the death of our oceans.

These are the negative externalities imposed by fossil fuels on all of us, and they will be borne largely by those least responsible for creating them and least able to mitigate their impacts.

We are committed to a just transition to renewable energy, to making workers employed in the oil and gas industry whole. To providing technical and financial support to younger workers transitioning to comparable non-fossil fuel work, and to providing a dignified retirement to those who could not reasonably make such a transition.

California's economy is highly diversified and dynamic, and we will not only achieve the transition to 100% renewable energy, we will use our early adoption to our advantage, we will build new industries, we will adapt and thrive, as we have repeatedly, consistently for going on two centuries.

Californians are trying to do our part to reduce greenhouse emissions and protect our natural world. The San Diego Region is committed to reducing emissions, dramatically expanding our transit system, decarbonizing our energy, and building up rather than out. But we cannot succeed in this transition if the federal government is against us. We need Congress to do its part as well.

For that reason, we applaud Congressman Levin and all of today's bill sponsors for their courage and leadership. It is an honor to share with you the work of repairing our world.

Bless you and thank you again for the opportunity to speak today.