

## **AJR-29 Oil and gas: offshore drilling: operations: leases**

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California Legislature

### **Mitty Advocacy Project**

Archbishop Mitty High School

Diocese of San Jose

As students of a Catholic high school, we at Archbishop Mitty believe that the environment—including both the natural landscapes and creatures that populate them—must be protected as God called upon us, his children, to protect all of his creation. In this day and age, environmental concerns are treated as second-hand issues. We believe that the continuation of this behavior and mindset will lead to the ultimate destruction of our planet.

### **AJR No. 29**

- Supports the current federal ban on any new oil and gas drilling in “federal waters the offshore California” and opposes the Trump administration's proposal to removal protection for further drilling.
- Urges the United State’s Secretary of Interior to remove California from the proposed leasing plans.
- Requests the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to have more than one public hearing on this issue in California to ensure all Californians’ voices are heard.

### **A Catholic Perspective on Environmental Justice:**

“[O]ur Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us...now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will...We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. *Gen 2:7*); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.”

—Pope Francis, *Laudato si'*

- We are called to care for creation and the “least of these.” Our disregard for the planet not only affects our environment but those who live in poverty and whose livelihood is directly tied to the condition of the environment.
- God intended the gifts of our planet to be for all his children to use, not for one person or group of people (in this case, one company) to abuse and singularly reap all the benefit.

## Statistics

- One drilling platform normally drills between 70 and 100 wells and discharges more than 90,000 metric tons of drilling muds (used for the lubrication and cooling of the drill bit and pipe) into the ocean. Drilling muds contain toxic chemicals which harm marine life.
- Oil companies often deliberately discharge methane into the air through venting, the controlled release of natural gas, and flaring, the burning of it off in the air. Methane is up to 84 times more harmful to the atmosphere than carbon dioxide, trapping heat more effectively and intensifying global warming.
  - According to a December 2014 study by The Wilderness Society, 21% of all U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, including methane, can be traced to oil, gas and coal extracted from federal lands.
- According to the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Department of Interior assessed that there is a 75% chance of a major oil spill occurring if the proposed offshore drilling does take place.
- 25% of the world's oil is burned here in the U.S., but we have only 3% of the world's oil reserves.

## A Youth’s Perspective on this Issue

- Contaminated ocean waters can directly affect our health if fish ingest the toxic substances given off by oil drilling, and then we in turn consume these fish.
- Marine mammals that ingest the oil while cleaning themselves could become poisoned. Although this seems like it’s an issue only to marine life, any stresses on the ecosystem will come back and ultimately affect our own communities. For example, if some crustaceans die off, this will cause a decrease in the already depleting otter population. Otters are keystone species, therefore the ocean as we know it will change for the worst.
- It is our job as individuals to have a voice for the voiceless. The voiceless in this case is the marine life that depend on the cleanliness of coastal waters.
- As residents of the Bay Area, we hope to enjoy the beaches of the Pacific Ocean. However, with offshore drilling, both the air and sea waters will be polluted, preventing our recreational enjoyment of this land.