

Court Orders Moratorium on Offshore Fracking Off California

State, Conservation Groups Win Lawsuit Against Trump Administration

By [Center For Biological Diversity](#)

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A federal court today ordered the Trump administration to stop issuing permits for offshore fracking in federal waters off the California coast. U.S. District Judge Philip S. Gutierrez concluded that the federal government violated the Endangered Species Act and the Coastal Zone Management Act when it allowed fracking in offshore oil and gas wells in all leased federal waters off California.

“Stopping offshore fracking is a big victory for California’s coast and marine life,” said Kristen Monsell, oceans program legal director at the Center for Biological Diversity. “We’re glad the Trump administration lost this round in its push to expand dangerous oil operations off California. This decision protects marine life and coastal communities from fracking’s toxic chemicals.”

The court order is the result of three lawsuits filed by the state of California, Center for Biological Diversity and Wishtoyo Foundation, and the Environmental Defense Center challenging the federal government’s approval and environmental review of offshore fracking in the Pacific Ocean.

“Protecting the health of our coastal waters is essential to our commitment to conserving the ecosystem and marine life necessary for our maritime culture,” said Mati Waiya, executive director of Wishtoyo Foundation. “The decision by honorable Judge Gutierrez upholds the law that ensures the health of our ocean waters. We all celebrate this decision that honors the rights of our maritime resources.”

The court held that federal officials violated the Endangered Species Act by failing to complete its consultation with expert wildlife agencies on the impacts of offshore fracking on endangered species. The court also said the Trump administration violated the Coastal Zone Management Act when it failed to let the California Coastal Commission determine whether offshore fracking is consistent with California’s coastal management program. The judge ordered the feds to complete the process with the State of California before approving any permits for offshore fracking.

“Endangered sea otters and other critters just won a reprieve from the Trump administration’s assault on our oceans for dirty oil,” Monsell said. “We plan to celebrate this great victory in the fight against climate change and dirty fossil

fuels.”

At least 10 fracking chemicals routinely used in offshore fracking could kill or harm a broad variety of marine species, including marine mammals and fish, Center scientists have [found](#). The California Council on Science and Technology has identified some common fracking chemicals to be among the most toxic in the world to marine animals.

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