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# Goleta Rally to Oppose Offshore Oil Drilling in California Sanctuary

# *Activists Gather Ahead of State Lands Commission Hearing*

GOLETA, *Calif.*— Community leaders, environmental activists, Chumash Native Americans, students and others concerned about a plan to expand offshore oil drilling in California waters will rally Wednesday afternoon outside Goleta City Hall.

Attendees at this colorful event will then proceed into a 3 p.m. hearing before the California State Lands Commission to consider a draft environmental impact report on Venoco’s proposal to drill in the California Coastal Sanctuary. The project would nearly quadruple the amount of oil produced every day at Platform Holly, a 50-year-old offshore drilling platform. And the produced oil would flow through the same Plains All-American pipeline that caused last year’s devastating Refugio Oil Spill that fouled Santa Barbara County’s coastline and wildlife.

**What:** Rally against Venoco’s proposal to trade an area that’s not producing oil so it can drill in 3,400 acres of untapped, protected property within the California Coastal Sanctuary.

**When:** Wednesday, Oct. 19, 2 p.m.

**Where:** Outside Goleta City Hall, 130 Cremona Street, Goleta.

**Who:** The rally is being sponsored by the Center for Biological Diversity, Food and Water Watch, Sierra Club and the Wishtoyo Foundation, which will all have speakers at the rally.

California has banned new offshore fossil fuel leases in state waters for good reason: Offshore oil and gas drilling causes oil spills that pollute beaches and kill marine wildlife. Offshore drilling also pollutes air, contaminates our water, and worsens the climate crisis. But Venoco is attempting to use a loophole for existing lease holders that would allow it to continue operating a decrepit, corroded system for decades to come.

“Offshore oil drilling in California should be shut down, not expanded. Rather than allowing Venoco to significantly expand its offshore-drilling operation, let’s transition to clean energy sources,” said Kristen Monsell, an attorney with the Center for Biological Diversity. “California’s vulnerable coastal zone can’t be submitted to more reckless oil production if we’re going to prevent more disastrous spills and address climate change in a meaningful way.”

"It's shocking that Venoco wants us to let them drill into the California Coastal Sanctuary, which would be the first new or expanded oil lease in State waters since the 1969 oil spill,” said Katie Davis, chair of the Santa Barbara Sierra Club. “This proposal also violates a settlement agreement with the State, the County and the Sierra Club as this area was originally quit-claimed into the sanctuary in exchange for drilling rights near Long Beach."

"The California Coastal Sanctuary should be protected, not subjected to expanded offshore oil drilling. Fossil fuel production has been polluting the state's water and threatening public health for too long,” said Alena Simon with Food and Water Watch. “We should embrace clean energy, starting here and now by phasing out dirty and dangerous offshore drilling."

"Expanding Venoco's offshore-drilling operation to include new wells and horizontal drilling will harm sacred Chumash Native American cultural resources on the ocean floor,” said Mati Waiya, Chumash Ceremonial Elder and Wishtoyo Foundation Executive Director. “Just as concerning, in the inevitable event of an oil spill, the natural environment the Chumash people depend on will be severely harmed and on shore village and burial sites will be destroyed,"

*The Center for Biological Diversity is a national, nonprofit conservation organization with more than 1.1 million members and online activists dedicated to the protection of endangered species and wild places.*