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Oregon offshore oil drilling ban passes Senate

Coastal oil drilling would negatively affect environment and coastal economy

SALEM – An offshore drilling ban on the Oregon Coast is moving forward in the Oregon Legislature.

[Senate Bill 256](#) – which passed on the Senate floor today – would make the state’s existing ban on exploration and drilling for oil off the Oregon coastline permanent. The bipartisan bill – introduced by Sen. Arnie Roblan, D-Coos Bay, Rep. David Gomberg, D-Central Coast, and Rep. David Brock Smith, R-Port Orford, as well as 19 other co-sponsors – would repeal the 2020 sunset date for the current drilling moratorium covering Oregon’s Territorial Sea, which extends 3 miles from the shore.

“The coastal way of life in Oregon, and our economy, depends on the thousands of fishing, tourism and recreation businesses in our communities,” Roblan said. “Those jobs and livelihoods would be put at risk if, for some reason, offshore oil drilling was to begin.”

With the passage of this legislation, Oregon would join a wave of numerous other coastal states opposing offshore drilling. The federal government released a proposal last January that would open 90 percent of United States waters up to oil and gas drilling. To date, Port Orford, Newport, Lincoln City, Toledo, Yachats and Gold Beach all have passed resolutions opposing new drilling. The Siletz Tribal Council, Port of Toledo and Port of Newport also have passed resolutions. More than 100 Oregon businesses – from seafood restaurants to surf shops and hotels – have joined the Business Alliance for Protecting the Pacific to oppose offshore oil drilling.

According to the National Ocean Economics Program, Oregon's ocean economy is worth \$2.5 billion annually and supports 33,000 jobs. More than 25,000 of those jobs are in tourism, recreation and fishing. Those sectors stand to lose the most from an oil spill.

"This bipartisan legislation builds on our state's proud history of coastal protection," Roblan said. "It also protects our existing coastal economy from potential future perils. This bill reflects the Oregon Way that we embrace in coastal communities."

Senate Bill 256 now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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