

ABOUT SB 6432: A bill to protect Washington's coast from an oil spill

In 2020, Washington state legislators have an opportunity to protect our valuable ocean resources, coastal communities and jobs, and vulnerable shorelines from the threats of a major oil spill and pollution through legislative solutions.



WASHINGTON IS A STATE with a robust fishing industry, a strong coastal tourism and recreation-based economy, and a world-class marine ecosystem—yet the prospect of an oil spill still hangs over our coastal communities. From Long Beach to Neah Bay to the Salish Sea, Washingtonians and their elected representatives in Olympia are working hard to grow local and rural jobs and strong communities, and maintain our cultures and ways of life. These coastal communities deserve commonsense safeguards to protect our jobs, livelihoods, the place we call home, and our region's iconic species like orcas and salmon, from the threat of a devastating oil spill.

The risk of an oil spill

In January 2018, the federal government released a proposal to open 90% of U.S waters—including Washington's entire coast—to oil and gas drilling. This would undermine decades of bipartisan coastal protection. In January 2020, the federal administration also announced major changes to the National Environmental Policy Act, one of our nation's bedrock environmental laws, that have the potential to fast-track approval of offshore oil infrastructure projects. These two federal proposals threaten the many coastal communities, businesses and industries that depend upon a healthy ocean and clean, oil-free beaches for survival.

An oil spill would shut down commerce in fishing, tourism, and recreation, which support more than 84,000 jobs in Washington and generate approximately \$5.2 billion in gross domestic product. The federal drilling proposal has met with steep, bipartisan opposition, with the towns and cities of Aberdeen, Hoquiam, Ilwaco, Long Beach, Montesano, Ocean Shores, Raymond, Seattle, South Bend and Westport, as well as the Port of Ilwaco passing resolutions opposing oil and gas drilling off our coast. Tribal governments such as the Quinault Indian Nation and the Makah Indian Tribe have also come out against offshore oil drilling.

[Learn more >](#)

We must act now on the legislative solution, SB 6432.

We must act now to protect our jobs, livelihoods, and the place we call home from the threat posed by drilling off our coast.



A solution through legislative action

To protect Washington's coastal businesses and residents from the devastating impacts of an oil spill, the state must ensure oil and gas extraction will never happen off our coast. That's why legislation has been introduced to disallow any leasing of aquatic lands, tidelands, or submerged lands associated with the outer continental shelf for oil or gas exploration, development or production, or state permitting for shoreline or seafloor infrastructure that would support offshore oil and gas development off the Washington coast.

Why now?

Washington's marine waters are known for their abundance of fish and wildlife. Our beaches are world-renowned for their wild beauty. Not only does the Washington coast draw tourists and retirees, but fishing, tourism and recreation provide precious jobs and a way of life for our rural, coastal communities from Neah Bay to Long Beach.

An offshore drilling ban will prevent undue risk from pollution or oil spills to tribes, our coastal fishing,

tourism and recreation industries, and our world-class marine ecosystem. Over 30 years ago, Washington state fishermen were called north to assist in the emergency clean-up efforts after the Exxon Valdez disaster, which devastated orca populations in Prince William Sound. This coming April will also mark ten years since the Deepwater Horizon Gulf oil spill, the largest marine oil spill in history and considered also to be the biggest environmental disaster in U.S. history, including the deaths of 11 innocent workers.

With the federal administration's proposed weakening of the National Environmental Policy Act and the associated reduction in environmental reviews and public input, this ban of offshore oil and gas extraction will prevent oil spills and pollution and undue risk to tribes, coastal fishing, tourism and recreation industries, and Washington's world-class marine ecosystem.

For more information, please contact:

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