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## Westly Stands Against End to Coastal Drilling Ban

*House Amendment Lifts 25-year Ban on New Drilling off CA Coast*

**SACRAMENTO** – State Controller and State Lands Commission Chair Steve Westly today called on Congress to oppose a bill amendment introduced today that would end the 25-year-old ban on natural gas drilling in federal waters off of California’s coast.

“Offshore drilling threatens California’s fragile coastal ecosystem and our entire economy,” Westly said, adding that he rejects the oil and gas industry’s use of high fuel prices to justify lifting the ban on offshore drilling. “The solution to high energy costs is not more drilling that perpetuates the use of 100-year-old technology. We must focus on long-term alternative energy sources that reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. We cannot drill our way out of our energy crisis.”

A ban on new drilling leases within federal waters off of California’s coast has been in place since 1981. Congress set the ban with bipartisan support, and with overwhelming backing by Californians amid increased awareness of the dire economic and environmental threat offshore drilling poses.

The State Lands Commission has refused to approve any new drilling leases within state waters, which extend three miles from the coastline, since 1969. That year, the Santa Barbara coast was devastated by an oil spill from an offshore drilling platform.

“There will be no new drilling leases on my watch,” Westly said. “The federal government may have jurisdiction over most of the waters off of our coast, but California’s environment and economy will take the hit from a spill. The federal government must respect California’s consistent and clear opposition to any drilling off of our coast.”

Westly is also a member of the newly-formed Ocean Protection Council.

Today, the House Appropriations Committee approved an amendment introduced by Rep. John Peterson (R-PA) that would lift the 25-year old Congressional ban on offshore natural gas production. The amendment would allow drilling on the Outer Continental Shelf, which is under federal jurisdiction and extends from 3 miles to 200 miles off of the coast.

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## **Westly Stands Against End to Coastal Drilling Ban 2-2-2**

Controller Westly has led national efforts to reduce the use of fossil fuels and to improve California's environment. He started the Global Warming Auto Watch, a national coalition that is successfully pushing the world's largest automakers to produce cleaner cars. At the Institutional Investor Summit on Climate Risk at the United Nations, Controller Westly led an effort to raise \$1 billion for investments in clean technologies.

"The focus must be on alternatives, not more of the same," Westly said.

**Please see attached text of letter sent to the California Congressional Delegation.**

May 10, 2006

Dear Representative \_\_\_\_:

As California's Chief Financial Officer and Chair of the State Lands Commission, I strongly oppose Representative Peterson's amendment to the Interior Department spending bill in the House Appropriations Committee. The amendment would eviscerate the quarter century bipartisan moratorium on drilling in the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS).

The vast majority of California's elected leaders and people are opposed to any effort to open our State's coastline to new gas drilling. Our opposition has been clear and consistent since well before the 1981 moratorium was put into place.

California has not approved any new drilling leases in State waters since 1969, when an oil spill wreaked havoc on the Santa Barbara coast. As Chair of the State Lands Commission, I will ensure that policy continues on my watch. I was proud in 2004 and 2005 to help lead the California State Lands Commission to take actions urging President Bush and Congress to maintain the federal offshore oil and gas-leasing moratorium.

Offshore drilling would threaten California's fragile coastal ecosystem and our entire economy. With a total annual market revenues of \$42.9 billion, California has the largest ocean economy in the United States. California's coastal communities are central to our overall economy: 86% of all California economic activities occur within these communities and 81% of all jobs are located there. The tourism and recreation sectors continue to dominate our State's job growth.

The oil and gas industry points to skyrocketing fuel prices as a reason for lifting the ban on offshore drilling. But the solution to high energy costs is not more drilling that perpetuates the use of 100-year-old technology. We must focus on long-term alternative energy sources that reduce our dependence on fossil fuels.

I have long supported more public and private investments in renewable energy, including leading a national effort to invest \$1 billion in clean technologies. I am also proud to have started the Global Warming Auto Watch, a national coalition that is successfully pushing the world's largest automakers to produce cleaner cars.

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### **Westly Stands Against End to Coastal Drilling Ban 3-3-3**

I urge you to fight this effort to end the OCS drilling moratorium on natural gas and to urge your Congressional colleagues to focus on solutions that will truly address our country's long-term energy needs. I extend to you any assistance I can offer through the Office of State Controller, State Lands Commission, Ocean Protection Council or in any other way.

Sincerely,  
Steve Westly

cc: The Honorable Dianne Feinstein, U.S. Senate  
The Honorable Barbara Boxer, U.S. Senate

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