



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: June 18, 2019

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ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS GO TO FEDERAL COURT OF APPEALS TO PROTECT AGAINST OFFSHORE FRACKING

SANTA BARBARA, CA—Today, the Environmental Defense Center (“EDC”) and Santa Barbara Channelkeeper (“SBCK”) announced that they will go to the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit to defend their court victory that currently prohibits the use of fracking and acidizing offshore California. The groups will also seek full environmental review of the impacts of these dangerous practices on the local environment, including air and water pollution, as well as harm to marine and coastal wildlife, such as the threatened Southern sea otter and Western snowy plover.

In November 2018, a federal District Court judge ruled in favor of EDC and SBCK, prohibiting the Trump Administration from approving fracking and acidizing offshore California until the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Coastal Commission have the opportunity to review such practices. That decision is now on appeal by the American Petroleum Institute. Today EDC and SBCK filed their own appeal to ensure full compliance with environmental protection laws.

“The current ban halting the dangerous practices of offshore fracking and acidizing is critical to protecting our local environment,” said Linda Krop, Chief Counsel at EDC, which represents EDC and SBCK in this matter. “We are committed to ensuring the federal government fully discloses the impacts of these practices before the court decides if they can continue.”

“The impacts of offshore fracking and acidizing on local wildlife have never been meaningfully analyzed,” said Kira Redmond, Executive Director of SBCK. “These practices will extend the life of existing oil platforms in a sensitive marine environment which is still recovering from the 2015 Plains All American Pipeline rupture that devastated our coastline. We need information to understand the potential impacts of these practices so that appropriate measures can be implemented to protect marine life, our coast, our communities, and our economy.”

EDC and SBCK filed a lawsuit in November 2016 alleging that fracking and acidizing can harm species protected under the Endangered Species Act (“ESA”), such as the Southern sea otter, and that such activities must be stopped until federal wildlife agencies can conduct their review to ensure that these species are not harmed. The Court agreed with EDC and SBCK, concluding that the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (“BOEM”) and Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (“BSEE”) violated the ESA when they approved the practices of fracking and acidizing from platforms offshore California. In ruling in favor of EDC and SBCK, the court issued an injunction “to prevent the irreparable harm” that will occur if BOEM and BSEE approve permits before the Fish and Wildlife Service completes its review. The court also ruled in favor of the State of California’s claim that fracking and acidizing cannot occur offshore California until the Coastal Commission has an opportunity to review the potential harm to our State’s coastal zone. The Commission’s review will require a full public hearing process.

The use of offshore fracking and acidizing in the Santa Barbara Channel poses significant risks to the sensitive marine environment. The Santa Barbara Channel harbors such incredible biological diversity that it has been dubbed the “Galapagos of North America.” Acidizing and fracking are both potentially dangerous oil production processes involving the injection of large amounts of water and chemicals below the seafloor in order to fracture or dissolve rock. More information can be found in EDC’s [Dirty Water: Fracking Offshore California](#) report.

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The Environmental Defense Center, a non-profit law firm, protects and enhances the local environment through education, advocacy, and legal action and works primarily within Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo counties. Since 1977, EDC has empowered community-based organizations to advance environmental protection. EDC’s focus areas include protection of the Santa Barbara Channel, ensuring clean water, preserving open space and wildlife, and addressing climate and energy. Learn more about EDC at www.EnvironmentalDefenseCenter.org.

Santa Barbara Channelkeeper is a grassroots non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and restoring the Santa Barbara Channel and its watersheds through science-based advocacy, education, field work and enforcement. Learn more about SBCK at www.sbck.org.