



United States Senate

January 27, 2020

Senator Henry I. Stern
Chair
Committee on Natural Resources
And Water
State Capitol, Room 5046
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assembly Member Laura Friedman
Chair
Committee on Natural Resources
1020 N Street, Room 164
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Stern and Assembly Member Friedman,

I would like to thank you for your leadership as Chairs of the California State Senate and Assembly Committees on Natural Resources, and write to express my strong support for today's oversight hearing on the Cymric oil spill and the future of a safe and sustainable California energy policy.

We cannot frack or drill our way to a clean energy future. There have been too many instances of environmental disasters occurring in California. I remember the Santa Barbara oil spill in 1969 that spilled 4.2 million gallons of crude oil. Then in 1971, 800,000 gallons of bunker fuel spilled in San Francisco Bay and, in 1990, an oil tanker spilled more than 400,000 gallons off Huntington Beach. And, today's topic, the almost 1 million gallons of oil and water leaked in Kern County.

I commend Governor Newsom for blocking all new fracking permits until they can be independently reviewed. I also support his halting of new permits for high-pressure, steam-injected oil drilling. Ensuring that these invasive and potentially dangerous extraction methods are safe and won't harm homes, schools, hospitals, and parks is vital to public health and safety.

At the federal level, I continue to strongly support efforts to regulate the oil industry's extraction processes, particularly fracking. Specifically, the "Fracturing Responsibility and Awareness of Chemicals (FRAC) Act," of which I am a cosponsor in the United States Senate, would close a loophole that currently exempts fracking from oversight by the Environmental Protection Agency. This bill would also require oil companies to disclose the chemical materials they inject into the ground. By enforcing greater transparency of the fracking process, our bill would ensure that the public and first responders can properly respond if toxic

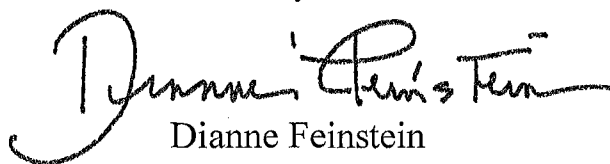
fracking chemicals are found in surface water and underground drinking water sources.

Furthermore, I am committed to permanently banning offshore drilling in federal waters off the coast of California. Last year, I reintroduced the “West Coast Ocean Protection Act,” which would permanently prohibit oil drilling in these waters, which are essential to coastal economies and healthy marine ecosystems. Nearly 70 percent of Californians oppose offshore drilling, according to recent polling by the Public Policy Institute of California. I am pleased to report that our bill recently passed the House of Representatives as part of a larger package of bipartisan legislation.

Most critically, I believe that all future decisions on fossil fuel exploration in California should be considered through the lens of the climate emergency facing us all. California has led the nation in transitioning away from fossil fuels, and we must take all possible measures to mitigate the impacts of climate change on the environment, our natural resources, and public health.

It is my hope that the state’s efforts to improve the regulatory agency that oversees California’s oil industry will make a meaningful difference. Changing the name of the Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources to the Geologic Energy Management Division and updating the agency’s priorities are positive first steps to ensure more effective oversight and to expedite the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. I am heartened that today’s hearing is being held, and I commend the Senate and Assembly for taking seriously the need to improve this state agency.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dianne Feinstein". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

DF/rs/ks