October 8, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer  
Majority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-107, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Hoyer:

A major oil spill is unfolding off the Southern California coast, about nine miles from Huntington Beach, California. Estimates suggest that at least 144,000 gallons of oil have spilled from an offshore pipeline connected to the Elly platform. Dead birds and dead fish are already washing ashore, local beaches have been closed, boaters are being asked to stay away, and all fishing is curtailed for the area. Oil pollution threatens the more than $2 billion in wages and $4.15 billion in gross domestic product generated by the marine economy in Orange County.

With this in mind, we urge you to retain the offshore oil and gas related provisions in the Build Back Better Act, including the provision that invests in the long-term protection of coastal communities by ending new federal oil and gas leasing off the Pacific and Atlantic coasts, and in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico. These provisions reduce the financial risks that existing policies create for the federal government while raising significant revenues and protecting taxpayers.

It is time to enact a budget that ends new federal leasing for offshore oil and gas drilling and prevents the next oil spill. Oil spills shut down the very activity that drives coastal economies. As we are seeing in California right now, toxic oil is covering marine wildlife, causing beaches to close, and shutting down recreation areas that support local businesses and industries. We cannot afford to keep investing our nation’s budget in harmful leasing at a time when we should be investing in coastal communities, which requires preventing new offshore leasing. To avoid the next drilling disaster and protect future generations we must permanently protect our coasts from new offshore drilling. Thousands of jobs in industries like tourism, recreation, and fishing rely on the decisions we make in the coming weeks and months.

Support for protecting our coasts from new drilling is backed broadly, as Americans see the environmental impacts of recurring oil spills and the associated greenhouse gas emissions that drive the climate crisis. Currently, more than 390 coastal municipalities have formally opposed drilling off their coastline, as has every governor of a state along the West and East Coasts. Alliances representing more than 50,000 businesses have also expressed their opposition.

Congress has a crucial opportunity to end new offshore oil and gas leasing in the Build Back Better Act. We are confident your leadership will help us pass a budget that invests in protecting our coastal communities.
Sincerely,

Mike Levin
Member of Congress

Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

Jared Huffman
Member of Congress
Chair, Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife

J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress

Julia Brownley
Member of Congress

Doris Matsui
Member of Congress

Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress

John Garamendi
Member of Congress
Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress

Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress

Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

Kathy Castor
Member of Congress

Mike Quigley
Member of Congress

Mike Thompson
Member of Congress
Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress

Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress

Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress

Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress

Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress

Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress

Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress

Ted Lieu
Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress
David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

Peter Welch
Member of Congress

Ro Khanna
Member of Congress

Judy Chu
Member of Congress

Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress

Ami Bera, M.D.
Member of Congress

A. Donald McEachin
Member of Congress

Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress
CC:  Representative Raúl Grijalva, Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources  
Representative John Yarmuth, Chairman, Committee on the Budget  
Representative Richard E. Neal, Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means  
Ron Klain, Chief of Staff, The White House
Gina McCarthy, National Climate Advisor, The White House
Ali Zaidi, Deputy National Climate Advisor, The White House