



Our Children's Earth Foundation | 100 First Street, Suite 100-367, San Francisco, CA 94105

NEWS RELEASE

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Environmental Groups Sue US EPA for Failing to Issue Water Permits to Oil Platforms Bush Administration Refusal to Issue Permits Leads to Continued Pollution Discharges into Pacific Ocean

San Francisco, CA --- Three environmental groups filed a lawsuit today against the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Administrator, Michael Leavitt, and Regional Administrator, Wayne Nastri for failing to update existing expired permits which do not meet current state and federal clean water standards governing the discharge of pollution into the Pacific Ocean.

"EPA should have revised some of the permits involved here over 20 years ago and every five years after that," said Tiffany Schauer, Executive Director of Our Children's Earth. "What makes this even worse is that three years ago, the Clinton administration had finally proposed to get permits out that comply with California's stringent water quality standards, but the Bush administration tabled that idea, allowing the old, much less effective permits to remain in effect."

The suit, filed in U.S. District Court by Our Children's Earth Foundation, Santa Barbara ChannelKeeper, and Get Oil Out, alleges that the EPA has failed to issue and finalize clean water permits to twenty-two oil exploration and drilling platform facilities located off of the coast of Central and Southern California. The permits, called National Permit Discharge Elimination System permits, govern the discharge of pollutants into public waterways.

"It's ironic that the Bush administration touts state's rights, yet the administration's delay in getting out these permits is part of its overall strategy to protect the oil industry from having to comply with water quality standards developed by the Coastal Commission that apply to everyone else in the state," said Linda Krop, Chief Counsel for the EDC and co-counsel in the case.

The suit cites an EPA 2003 Fact Sheet that indicated that the several toxic pollutants had been found in oil platform discharges including ammonia and arsenic. The groups are seeking a court order to require EPA to promptly act to comply with its several mandatory duties to issue updated NPDES permits for the Oil Platforms as require by the Clean Water Act.

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Our Children's Earth Foundation is serving as co-counsel in this case. Our Children's Earth is a San Francisco-based non-profit organization that works to protect the public,

especially children, from the health impacts of pollution and other environmental hazards. To access a copy of the complaint and to learn more about OCE visit www.ocefoundation.org

The Environmental Defense Center (EDC) is serving as co-counsel in this case. Since 1977, EDC has been serving California's Central Coast as the only non-profit environmental law firm between Los Angeles and San Francisco, assisting other environmental and community groups with their efforts to protect our cherished quality of life. To learn more about EDC, visit www.edcnet.org.

Plaintiff Get Oil Out (GOO) was formed in response to the 1969 Santa Barbara oil spill. GOO provides education about the risks of off shore oil and gas development, and represents several hundred supporters and a majority of Californians in supporting legal procedures that challenge offshore oil projects or serve to mitigate the impacts of the projects that are developed.

Plaintiff Santa Barbara ChannelKeeper (SBCK) is a non-profit organization located in Santa Barbara, California, whose mission is to protect and restore the Santa Barbara Channel and its watersheds through enforcement, citizen action, and education. To learn more about SBCK, visit www.sbck.org.

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