



2024 Federal Priorities

Hundreds of millions of Americans participate in ocean and Great Lakes recreation each year, supporting millions of jobs and generating \$138 billion annually. Yet, our nation's coastlines, which many of these industries depend upon, are under siege from the impacts of pollution and development. Federal leadership is needed to ensure clean water, resilient coasts, and a healthy ocean.

PROTECT CLEAN WATER & PUBLIC HEALTH

Sewage spills and stormwater runoff threaten the health of beachgoers and coastal ecosystems across the US. These problems will worsen with more extreme weather events, flooding and sea level rise overwhelming wastewater systems. Sufficient water quality monitoring is needed to protect public health, identify pollution hotspots, and inform solutions.

Support: FY2025 EPA funding appropriations of \$15 million; and H.R. 7203 to reauthorize the BEACH Act Grants Program.

PROHIBIT NEW OFFSHORE OIL DRILLING

The expansion of offshore drilling in U.S. federal waters directly threatens wildlife, marine ecosystems, and communities that depend upon them. New leasing exacerbates climate change impacts and undermines U.S. efforts to reduce carbon pollution. Congress must prohibit new oil and gas development in Atlantic, Pacific, Gulf of Mexico, and Alaskan waters.

Support: Legislation that prohibits new offshore drilling US waters, including in the:

East: H.R. 1320/S. 617 COAST Anti-Drilling Act

West: H.R. 470/S. 22. West Coast Ocean Protection Act

Florida & E. Gulf: H.R. 1443 Florida Coastal Protection Act

Arctic: H.R. 4031/S. 3201 Stop Arctic Ocean Drilling Act



PREVENT PLASTIC POLLUTION

Each year plastic facilities release trillions of pre-production plastic pellets directly into our nation's waterways. This pollution enters the ocean and poses a major threat to marine ecosystems, our coastal economy, and the food chain. Congressional leadership is needed to pressure the EPA to establish effluent limitation guidelines that prohibit the release of plastic nurdles into the environment.

Support: S. 2337/HR. TBD Plastic Pellet Free Waters Act, a breakaway bill of the comprehensive Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act.

ABOUT THE SURFRIDER FOUNDATION

The Surfrider Foundation is a grassroots non-profit environmental organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of our ocean, waves, and beaches for all people.

Founded in 1984 by a handful of visionary surfers, Surfrider's network includes over 200 volunteer chapters and student clubs, and over a million members and supporters.

For more information, visit go.surfrider.org/coastalhillday and surfrider.org



Support the BEACH Act to Protect Beach Water Quality and Public Health

Hundreds of millions of Americans and visitors enjoy U.S. beaches every year, driving coastal tourism and recreation industries valued at \$138 billion and supporting 2.5 million jobs nationwide. Water quality monitoring programs funded through EPA's Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health (BEACH) Act Grants Program provide families with the information they need to stay safe at the beach and safeguard our valuable coastal economies.

PROBLEM

The BEACH Act has been chronically underfunded for the last 20 years, causing gaps in state and local water quality testing programs. This leaves beach goers unknowingly at risk of exposure to pathogens from failing sewage infrastructure and stormwater runoff. Recreating in polluted water can cause skin infections, gastrointestinal symptoms and worse, and cost Americans an estimated \$2.9 billion nationwide.



SOLUTION

Sufficient water quality monitoring and public notification of pollution events are needed to protect public health and inform solutions. The American public deserves to know if a visit to the beach could make them sick.

Support: Appropriations of \$15 million for the EPA BEACH Act Grants program in FY25 to fund beach water quality monitoring and public notification programs in coastal states and territories.

Support: H.R. 7203 BEACH Act of 2024 to extend the authorization of the EPA's BEACH Act Grants program to allow states more flexibility to protect public health where it is most needed and to identify local sources of pollution to restore clean water.

Prohibit New Offshore Oil & Gas Drilling

Our coastlines support an array of incredible wildlife and ecosystems, support millions of jobs, and are home to nearly 40% of the U.S. population. Unfortunately, our coasts are vulnerable to new offshore oil and gas leasing by the Department of Interior. Surfrider is calling on Congress to pass legislation to prohibit new offshore oil and gas leasing in all U.S. waters.

PROBLEM

Marine environments and human communities are threatened by new offshore oil and gas leasing proposals. Each stage of offshore drilling causes serious impacts.

Even before drilling begins, harmful impacts start from oil exploration where seismic blasts stun and deafen marine life, including whales and dolphins. Once drilling starts, rigs emit toxic muds onto the seafloor, continuously polluting our oceans with heavy metals and petroleum derivatives. Oil spills are unavoidable, causing damage to entire ecosystems, while threatening our ocean recreation and tourism economy that provides 12 times more jobs than offshore oil production.

Onshore refineries pollute frontline communities with carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide and toxins that damage public health. Offshore drilling disproportionately impacts lower-income and communities of color. Finally, the oil and gas sector is the second largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the U.S. Instead of reducing risks, new drilling will exacerbate the dangerous effects of climate change.

SOLUTIONS

Pass legislation to protect our coasts. Surfrider supports legislation to prohibit new oil and gas development on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) and opposes mandates to require new OCS oil and gas leasing. More than 400 municipalities, 2,500 elected officials, 55,000 businesses and 500,000 fishing families oppose new offshore oil and gas development. It's time to end new offshore drilling in the US.

East Coast

S. 617/H.R. 1320- Clean Ocean and Safe Tourism (COAST) Anti-Drilling Act

West Coast

S. 22/H.R. 470- West Coast Protection Act

Florida & Eastern Gulf

H.R. 1443- Florida Coastal Protection Act

Alaska

S. 3201/H.R. 4031- Stop Arctic Ocean Drilling Act

National

S. 3026/H.R. 4936- Nonrestrictive Offshore Wind Act



Protect Our Coasts, Waterways, and Communities from Plastic Pollution

Plastic pollution in our ocean and inland waters affects all Americans. We depend on our ocean, waterways, and Great Lakes for recreation, economic security, and overall public health. Unfortunately, plastic production creates environmental and economic damage from start to finish, including the release of an estimated 10 trillion pre-production plastic pellets into our nation's waterways each year. To prevent these harms, the Surfrider Foundation supports legislation that prohibits the release of plastic pellets.

PROBLEM

Current law allows the plastic industry to discharge trillions of pre-production plastic pellets directly into America's waterways and ocean with little to no enforcement.

Plastic pellets, also known as "nurdles," are the pre-production building blocks of nearly all plastic goods. Due to the low cost of production, pellets are often washed down drains or dumped if they come in contact with other materials like dust and dirt. They are also often spilled both in the shipping and production process, finding their way into our waterways.

SOLUTION

Congressional action is needed to prohibit the release of plastic nurdles from production, packaging and transport facilities to protect local water quality, beaches and wildlife from harmful plastic pollution.

Support: S. 2337/ H.R. TBD Plastic Pellet Free Waters Act.

This is straightforward legislation that requires the Environmental Protection Agency to prohibit the discharge of plastic pellets from facilities that make, use, package, or transport those materials; and update all existing permits and standards to reflect those prohibitions. This is a breakaway bill from the far more comprehensive Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act (S.3127/HR. 6053).



Nurdles look like fish eggs and pose major risks to wildlife, including sea birds, fish and marine mammals that mistakenly consume them.

Protect Clean Water at the U.S./Mexico Border

The Pacific coastline along the U.S./Mexico border is steeped in rich multi-cultural identities, immense biodiversity, and contributes high economic value to both countries. Yet, this region is plagued by severe pollution that threatens public health, limits coastal access, hurts ecosystems and wildlife, and jeopardizes local economies and national security.

PROBLEM

Every year, billions of gallons of toxic waste, raw sewage, and trash flow into the Tijuana River Valley, closing beaches and sickening people and wildlife. When it rains, the high volume of water and pollution overwhelms regional infrastructure and creates dangerous conditions for the natural environment and local communities.

Wastewater treatment plants on both sides of the border regularly fail due to decades of neglect. A 2017 [study](#) by Scripps Institute of Oceanography linked 34,000 illnesses in Imperial Beach, CA to water pollution. Another recent [study](#) reported that sewage routinely enters the air from sea spray, causing widespread respiratory illnesses. Residents are getting sick not only when playing in the ocean or sitting on the beach, but also while standing in their own backyards. Meanwhile, lifeguards, emergency responders, Navy Seals, and Border Patrol Agents work and train in contaminated environments, risking their own health and our national security.

“An entire generation of children is growing up in South San Diego County, having only experienced polluted beaches.”

Written by Imperial Beach Mayor Aguirre in her June 6 letter to the Biden administration.

Right: San Diego County’s southernmost beach has been closed for over 780 consecutive days and counting.

SOLUTION

The USMCA International Trade Agreement provided \$300 million to fund border wastewater infrastructure but nearly \$700 million more is needed to fully implement the Comprehensive Infrastructure Solution to decrease cross-border flows by 75% year-round and reduce beach closures by 95% in summer months.

Surfrider calls on Congress to support federal funding to close the \$700 million gap:

Support: Supplemental funding of \$310 million for the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC)

Support: Appropriations of \$100 million, the full authorized level, for the EPA Border Water Infrastructure Program

Support: Funding authority language that allows the IBWC to receive funding from federal and state agencies

