

Biden Blocks Fossil Fuel Leases on Public Lands

A reprieve for Californians, Climate

On January 27, the Biden administration announced a [suspension of new oil and gas leasing on public lands and waters](#). The order commences a review of existing leases and permits and looks to increase offshore wind renewable energy development. The administration has directed agencies to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies and to instead identify new opportunities to spur clean energy.



In California, the announcement came one month after the Trump administration's Bureau of Land Management sold over 4000 acres in Kern County for oil drilling and fracking— the first oil and gas lease sale in over eight years. Read [about the executive order here](#).

“We support the Biden administration's ban on new oil and gas leasing on public lands,” said Cesar Aguirre, Community Organizer with the Central California Environmental Justice Network. “We need policies that lead us to a safer and more livable environment for all Americans, but especially for those of us who live, study and work in areas disproportionately harmed by fossil fuel extraction and pollution. It is clear we cannot wait any longer. We are choking from wildfire smoke, and thousands of oil rigs and storage tanks in our backyards are leaking and poisoning us with benzene. For too long, our residents in Kern County have been the target of irresponsible administrations— both federal and local— that deny the climate crisis and continue gambling our health on the fossil fuel industry. For California to be a climate leader, we need and encourage this bold action to prevent more fossil fuel destruction.”

“Oil and gas development on federal lands is already a major contributor to climate change. The Biden administration's ban is an important first step and should result in a permanent end to federal leasing,” said Rebecca August, Director of Advocacy at Los Padres ForestWatch. “Putting the brakes on selling out our shared resources to the oil industry—lands that are supposed to be managed in the public interest—is a sign that the administration is serious in its commitment to put our nation's future, public health, biodiversity, drinking water, and the legacy of our public lands before corporate profit.”

“We are encouraged that the Biden administration has moved to halt new oil and gas leasing on public lands — a decision that will benefit the health of communities, wild places and the climate in California and beyond,” said Jenny Binstock, Senior Campaign Representative for Sierra Club's Our Wild America Campaign in California. “Our state has seen climate devastation

on an alarming and unprecedented scale over the past years and needs urgent action to make public lands a part of the solution. Stopping new drilling and fracking on public lands will provide a much-needed step in tackling the climate crisis.”