



## Senator Feinstein Calls on State Leaders to Continue Push for Protection of California's Coast from Offshore Drilling

September 7, 2006

**Washington, DC** – With major oil companies seeking to conduct slant oil drilling off the California coast, U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) is calling today on California Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata (D-Oakland) and Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez (D-Los Angeles) to continue their efforts to tighten a loophole in State law that could allow for additional offshore drilling.

Senator Feinstein expressed her concern that further drilling off the coast of California could result in an environmentally devastating oil spill and thanked the two lawmakers for trying to close the loophole in the final days of the legislative session.

In her letters to Perata and Núñez, Senator Feinstein wrote:

**“I appreciate your efforts to prevent any further attempts to drill off our State’s coastlines.**

**I remain concerned that our coast remains under threat from new drilling because the 1994 State ban allows the California State Lands Commission to issue new leases for oil and gas extraction if a well in federal waters is pulling oil and gas from nearby state reserves.**

**As you know, Plains Exploration, which operates Platform Irene, is already pulling oil and gas from the state reserves, and is now looking to take advantage of the loophole in the 1994 law to get a new lease to expand slant drilling operations in state waters at Tranquillon Ridge.**

**One of the primary concerns about issuing a new lease to Plains Exploration is that it would extend the life of the existing platform and facilities, and increase the likelihood of oil spills. In fact, there was an oil spill from Platform Irene’s pipeline in 1997 of about 7,000 gallons that impacted more than 40 miles of shoreline and killed or injured over 800 seabirds. Expanding the life of this Platform only increases the likelihood of additional damage to our oceans and our coastline.**

**Plains Exploration is not alone. Exxon Mobil and Sunset Exploration have applied for a lease to slant drill from Vandenberg Air Force Base and also pull oil and gas from Tranquillon Ridge.**

**I understand that legislation to tighten the loophole in State law did not pass. I hope you ... will reintroduce the bill in the next legislative session. Please feel free to call on me for any help I can provide in pushing for this important legislation.**

**I appreciate your hard work on this and look forward to working with you to protect our State's coast."**

**###**