



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on April 24, 2019

Activists Urging California Governor Newsom to Restrict Oil Drilling and Fracking

After California Governor Gavin Newsom took office on January 7, a writer for the *Washington Post* observed, “The change of power ... will push this liberal state further left.” Environmental extremists are hoping that Newsom’s leftist views will include his support for banning new oil and gas drilling in California and a complete phase-out of all fossil-fuel extraction — including fracking.



While campaigning for governor, Newsom said he supported a ban on fracking and new offshore drilling. And on February 7, 2018, when he was lieutenant governor and a member of the California State Lands Commission, Newsom signed a letter to Kelly Hammerle, national program manager of the Trump administration’s Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, regarding the National Oil and Gas Leasing Program. The letter read, in part:

The Commission opposes lease sales in [the Pacific Outer Continental Shelf] because it creates the potential for catastrophic peril to California’s ocean and marine environment, economy, and natural resources....

The catastrophic harm from an offshore oil spill is well-established and universally acknowledged....

Californians are vigorous advocates for their coast, and the prospect of new drilling in coastal waters provokes fierce opposition and sparks outrage....

The premise of the proposed leasing program is that extracting oil and gas from the nation’s oceans benefits the economy, but tapping into the ocean for oil development is folly — the fossil fuel era is ending, and California is not interested in the boom-or-bust oil economy.

An April 23 report in the *Los Angeles Times* noted the environmental activists have been urging Newsom to ban new oil and gas drilling and completely phase out fossil-fuel extraction in California, which it identified as in one of the nation’s top petroleum-producing and gasoline-consuming states.

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The *Times* cited Newsom’s statements that he is knowledgeable about the issues surrounding on-shore and off-shore oil drilling in California, and that he would announce his administration’s strategy on energy policy in the next few weeks.

It also observed that Newsom was “coy” about the specifics of that policy, and declined to say if it



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would ban hydraulic fracking.

“I’m taking a very pragmatic look at it, in scoping this,” Newsom told the *Times* during the previous week. “It’s also an inclusive scoping because it includes people in the industry, that have jobs; communities that are impacted from an environmental justice prism but also from an economic justice prism. It’s a challenging issue. There’s a reason Gov. Brown used a lot of dexterity on this issue.”

“One cannot just turn off the switch. One cannot just immediately abut against a century of practice and policy,” Newsom said.

An April 14 report from Capital Public Radio’s CALmatters noted that former California Governor Jerry Brown resisted intense pressure from anti-oil activists to ban fracking but signed into law a requirement that all chemicals used in the process be disclosed. However, noted the report, Newsom hasn’t made his position on fracking known and his staff did not answer questions from CALmatters about his current stance.

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