

FIGHT FOR THE

BIGHT

BIG OIL NEEDS TO BACK OFF

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Photo by Pierre Leverrier

The Great Australian Bight, one of the most biodiverse marine areas in the world, is at risk of deepwater oil drilling. The oil company Equinor has proposed an exploratory drilling well project to be completed by October 2019. The Australian Government has the ability to ban big oil in the bight, and to avoid extreme destruction to the environmental, economic, and social well-being of the bight and the area surrounding it. An oil spill can not be completely avoided, and a complete recovery simply does not exist.

THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN BIGHT

85% of the marine species cant be found anywhere else in the world



contains over 20 marine protected areas



contributes \$1.7 billion to the economy every year



home to the largest concentration of dolphins in the world



DEEPWATER DRILLING

Since 2011, several global oil companies have attempted to introduce deepwater oil drilling projects in the Great Australian Bight (GAB). Most recently, Equinor has proposed the construction of a "safe" exploratory well 370km offshore to be built by October 2019.

Equinor claims that this area could be one of the largest untapped oil reserves in Australia, promising economic gains to the entire country and a substantial increase in job opportunities. The plan includes thorough procedures for spill management and cleanup, and promises full recovery measures in the case of a disaster.

THE RISK OF A SPILL

The impacts of an oil spill in the GAB are extreme, and would have significant damage to the environmental, social, and economic aspects of Australia. If the government gives the go ahead, we risk:

ENVIRONMENTAL

Damage to the environment would be impossible to reverse, and would have severe impacts on the entire marine ecosystem in southern Australia. There would be lethal and sublethal impacts on hundreds of marine species (whales, dolphins, seals, turtles, fish, etc.). Hundreds of thousands of animals would lose their lives in a spill of this magnitude in an area this delicate. As this area is home to multiple endangered and endemic species, recovery from an oil spill in this area would be impossible and ecological injury could persist for decades to come.

ECONOMIC

An oil spill in the GAB would have immense damage on the Australian economy due to its importance in the fishing industry and the tourism industry. The GAB is home to a significant number of wild fisheries and aquaculture fisheries, worth \$500 million every year. Similarly, tourism in the GAB contribute \$1.2 billion to the economy every year. The fishing industry and tourism industry would have to halt business indefinitely having a large impact on the economy. Cleanup efforts for a spill have been predicted to cost upwards of \$62 billion.

SOCIAL

Thousands of jobs in the fishing and tourism industry would be put on hold or lost to the damages. Local communities - those who felt the strongest impact - would be responsible for the majority of the cleanup. Various indigenous communities have expressed their disagreement with the drilling and have played a part in the fight against big oil over the last 10 years. The cultural importance of the GAB and the livelihoods of the local community must be prioritized.



BIG RISK, LITTLE REWARD

Oil rigs create jobs, just not enough. Equinor is two thirds Norwegian, meaning that the majority of the profits do not remain within the Australian Economy. Despite their claims, Equinor has zero obligation to send any of their profits back to the local economy or hire local workers. The only benefit proposed is an increase in jobs and a decreased reliance on importing oil, both of which pale in comparison to the losses in expenses and jobs in the event of a spill. There is no environmental reward to deepwater drilling

BIG OIL IS NOT WORTH THE RISK



Photo by David Wingfield

THE PROOF IS IN THE PAST

- Since 2011, both BP and Chevron both withdrew their application to explore drilling in the GAB. Odds are that the high risk associated with drilling here, coupled with societal pressure, drove the companies away.
- A spill in the GAB has been predicted to release 7.9 million barrels of oil, making it by far the largest spill in history. This is DOUBLE what was spilled in Deepwater Horizon in 2010, a spill of epic proportions and damage to the environment, loss of life, and economic expenses. In addition, Equinor's well would be drilled one kilometre deeper than that of Deepwater, making problem solving even more difficult.

LEAVING BIG OIL BEHIND

The world is changing. Scientists have shown time and time again that we need to shift away from fossil fuels towards renewable and alternative sources of energy. Initiatives are under way to leave big oil behind, and to stop investing and expanding in the industry destroying our planet.

The investment in fossil fuel developments at this point in time, considering how much we know and where we need to go in the future, seems absolutely absurd. Continuing to grow a dying industry is not beneficial for the environment, the economy, the people, and the future of our time on earth.

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S

BAN BIG OIL IN THE BIGHT

Deepwater drilling has significantly more risks than rewards, and when the risks are so extreme, there shouldn't be a question about how to move forward. The environment, society, and economy will thrive in its absence.



IMPROVE MARINE REGULATIONS

Improving regulations for marine protected areas such that they don't allow excessive extraction of fish or resources is a great way to protect the environment.



INCREASE INVESTMENTS TO TOURISM AND FISHERIES

Investing in more opportunities in the fishing and tourism industry will improve the economic benefits from these already important industries and increase job opportunities



SHIFT TO RENEWABLE

Using this opportunity to shift away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy is a great way to set an example for the world and begin the journey towards a sustainable future.



ITS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.

Australia has an extremely unique opportunity.

The issue of deepwater drilling in the Great Australian Bight has caught global attention and interventions from individuals and groups all over the world. Extremely influential environmental groups such as SeaShepards, Greenpeace, and Patagonia have taken this issue extremely seriously and have relentlessly pushed against it. Now that the GAB is on the global stage, Australia has the opportunity to set an example for governments, individuals, environmental groups, and most importantly, big oil companies.

Australia has the opportunity to show big oil companies that fossil fuels are on their way out, and that investing in alternative measures of energy is the ONLY way forward. People from all over the world care about the GAB, and its value to Australia is unparalleled.

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