



The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) would like to thank Ambassador Carlos Márcio Bicalho Cozendey of Brazil and Mr. Ulrik Lenaerts of Belgium for co-facilitating the Ocean and Climate Dialogue during the 62nd Session of the Subsidiary Bodies of the UNFCCC.

For more than 55 years, NRDC has fought to protect climate-critical marine ecosystems, threatened species, and vulnerable coastal communities. We recognize that the ocean is a critical driver of climate change mitigation. From governing the weather, to cleaning the air, to feeding the world—the oceans play a crucial role in the establishment and implementation of robust and ambitious nationally determined contributions (NDCs). Continued fossil fuel exploitation, however, threatens the marine ecosystems we depend on for these solutions. Oil and gas development along our coastlines, such as offshore drilling and liquefied natural gas (LNG) industrialization for instance, will further erode our ocean’s resilience and its irreplaceable role as a major carbon sink.

Offshore drilling threatens the health of our public waters, the future of vulnerable wildlife, and the economic resiliency of human communities. As such, offshore drilling’s significant biodiversity and climate implications should be included in the conversation around climate change mitigation. Furthermore, the airgun arrays used in seismic surveys to locate oil and gas deposits create enormous adverse impacts on biodiversity. They disrupt vital behaviors in a wide range of marine species, and jeopardize the survival and reproduction of whales, fish, and other wildlife that depend on sound for life. The booming noise of this fossil fuel exploration technique harasses marine mammals and can mask whale calls over hundreds of miles, and impedes communication necessary for these highly social animals to forage food, find mates, and care for their young. Oil spills are also an inevitable consequence of drilling, from catastrophic spills like *Deepwater Horizon* to smaller but more frequent spills. Finally, offshore oil and gas production impacts human health too. The refineries that process the oil extracted off-shore emit toxic air pollutants that often sicken frontline communities.

In addition to the impacts of offshore oil and gas extraction, the expansion of liquid natural gas (LNG) infrastructure in coastal areas also creates deeply damaging impacts. For example, LNG terminals bring with them a substantial increase in large vessel traffic. This surge in vessel activity endangers marine wildlife through strikes that threaten whale populations and could drive some species to extinction. Increased underwater noise created by both LNG tankers and the coastal terminals will also disrupt marine mammals’ ability to communicate, navigate, and forage, with devastating consequences for young marine mammals. Furthermore, this

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infrastructure produces methane leaks and chronic oil spills that will choke our ocean and its ecosystems with pollution. Coastal communities whose economies rely on the ocean, particularly through fisheries and tourism, face the potential collapse of their livelihoods as a result of this myriad of adverse impacts.

The planned expansion of LNG infrastructure is also inconsistent with international climate goals. LNG is not a transition fuel. It is neither clean nor low in greenhouse gas emissions. Its unfettered expansion, especially into underexplored, pristine areas of significant biodiversity will continue to threaten our ocean until it is unrecognizable—polluted, warm, and acidic.

The science is clear: the production and consumption of fossil fuels is driving a climate crisis that is dramatically altering our environment. Transitioning away from these dirty, dangerous and outdated fuels is critical to combatting the climate crisis, which threatens our environment, our ocean, and human lives. To protect our ocean and preserve its critical role in mitigating climate impacts, countries must raise their ambition and leave no room for further fossil fuel infrastructure expansion in our oceans and coastal communities.

NRDC urges all Parties to fully recognize the central role the ocean plays in climate mitigation and to take bold, evidence and science-based action to protect it. We call on governments to reflect this urgency in their NDCs, long-term strategies, and financial commitments. Safeguarding our ocean means halting the expansion of offshore oil, gas, and LNG infrastructure, and accelerating the just energy transition toward clean and renewable energy sources. We are fully committed to continue engaging with Parties and non-state actors to strengthen ocean-based climate action through the Ocean and Climate Dialogue.