

California Ocean Science Trust Releases Study Evaluating
Alternatives for Decommissioning California's Offshore Oil and Gas
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Last week, the [California Ocean Science Trust](#) released a long-awaited study that synthesizes scientific and legal information to inform policymakers and stakeholders on alternative paths for the decommissioning of California's offshore oil and gas platforms.

27 of these platforms operate off the coast of California, and eventually all of them will stop producing fossil fuel and will have to be decommissioned. (I serve on the [Expert Advisory Committee](#) that has provided feedback to the team of authors that produced this report, though I haven't read the final report yet.)

Current state law requires that the platforms be completely dismantled eventually. But the report, [Evaluating Alternatives for Decommissioning California's Offshore Oil and Gas Platforms](#), evaluates other possible options, including partial removal options that would leave a portion of the platforms in place — commonly referred to as “rigs-to-reefs” — in order to provide information and analysis about the legal, technical, and economic issues that such options would raise. Among other things, implementing any partial removal option would require new legislation and changes to permitting requirements.

The state has considered the idea of rigs-to-reefs several times before, but the state has never passed enabling legislation. [This Los Angeles Times article from over ten years ago](#) describes some of the controversy surrounding such programs; it is unclear whether the battle lines have changed since then, but hopefully the report will at least provide useful background and technical information to inform policy discussions about decommissioning options. The report doesn't make any policy recommendations, but analyzes some of the tradeoffs among decommissioning options.

The report was commissioned by the California Resources Agency, through its [Ocean Protection Council](#). There will be a discussion about the report (with panelists including Linda Krop of the [Environmental Defense Center, which has been a major opponent of rigs-to-reefs programs](#)) at the [June 25 meeting of the California Ocean Protection Council in](#)

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[Santa Barbara.](#)

Unfortunately, I will be out of town for that meeting; I'm sure it will be both lively and informative.