

“A direct, existential, and unacceptable risk...”

100+ MEXICAN AND INTERNATIONAL SCIENTISTS AGREE: GULF OF CALIFORNIA IS THE WRONG PLACE FOR LNG

We, the undersigned, are marine and conservation scientists united in our profound concern about proposed liquefied natural gas (LNG) production and transport in the Gulf of California, an iconic natural ecosystem of global ecological significance. LNG development poses a direct, existential, and unacceptable risk to the internationally recognized biodiversity and habitat of the Gulf.

In 1978 Mexico designated parts of the Gulf as a Migratory Bird and Wildlife Refuge and, in 1993, as a Biosphere Reserve. In 2005, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) inscribed 12 protected areas across the Gulf as “The Islands and Protected Areas of the Gulf of California” World Heritage Site. Since 2022, the Gulf has been listed by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as an Important Marine Mammal Area. In 2025, the IUCN’s World Conservation Congress approved Resolution 8.031, calling on the Governments of Mexico and the United States to oppose, reconsider, or prohibit

authorizations permitting LNG industrialization of the Gulf.

Indeed, its marine biodiversity is extraordinary, including a spectacular array of migratory species such as blue, humpback, sperm, and gray whales, sea turtles, whale sharks, manta rays, and giant Humboldt squid—all dependent on the safe habitat that the Gulf provides. An evolutionarily distinct population of fin whales resides there year-round, and the upper Gulf serves as the last refuge of the critically endangered vaquita. More than 900 species of fish are found in its waters, as well as regionally significant corals, vibrant intertidal zones, and a third of all cetacean species on Earth. It is a uniquely rich resource for scientific research, enabling international scientific communities to deepen their understanding of the planet’s greatest ecosystem—the ocean. With good reason, renowned oceanographer Jacques Yves Cousteau described the Gulf as the “Aquarium of the World.”

We believe that industrialization of this exceptional region is contrary to the principles and values that World Heritage sites, biosphere reserves, and wildlife refuges were created to uphold. Siting of major industry will create a dangerous precedent at odds with the broad scientific consensus that the loss and degradation of habitat in the world’s estuaries and coastal waters is already harming innumerable species crucial for sustenance of both marine and terrestrial life.

More specifically, fracked gas produced in the Permian Basin is proposed to be piped to the Gulf, processed into LNG, and shipped to Asia in 900-foot tankers. Of particular concern are two projects currently proposed along the Gulf’s eastern shore: Saguaro Energia LNG, at Puerto Libertad, Sonora, and AMIGO LNG, at Guaymas, Sonora. The resulting substantial increase in ship traffic will pose a mortal danger to Gulf species vulnerable to vessel strikes, including whales, sea turtles, and whale sharks. Transiting tankers will exponentially increase levels of harmful underwater noise pollution in the Gulf’s

near-pristine acoustic habitat. The discharge of ballast water from tankers risks introducing invasive species, and ports will require ongoing dredging. Together, the impacts of LNG industrialization risk degrading the health of the entire Gulf ecosystem, the diversity of marine species it sustains, and commercial, recreational, and subsistence fisheries.

We respectfully submit that the production and transport of LNG pose an unacceptable risk to biological resources in a region renowned as one of the world’s most important areas of biodiversity. Because of its ecological sensitivity, and consistent with that global recognition, the Gulf of California is the wrong place to develop LNG. We therefore urge the Mexican and United States governments to heed the IUCN’s recommendation to reject these projects.

We trust that the Mexican government will continue its longstanding commitment to protecting the Gulf’s exceptional natural heritage, which has sustained the people and wildlife of the region for millennia.

Julia Carabias Lillo
Exsecretaría de la Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales
Profesora de Ecología de la Restauración, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México

Sylvia Earle
Former Chief Scientist, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Founder, Deep Ocean Exploration and Research, Mission Blue

Cristina Mittermeier
Co-founder and President, SeaLegacy
Founder, International League of Conservation Photographers

Jorge Urbán R
Profesor, Departamento Académico de Ciencias Marinas y Costeras, Universidad Autónoma de Baja California Sur

Exequiel Excurra¹
Profesor Distinguido y Emérito de Ecología, UC Riverside
Investigador Nacional Emérito

Lorenzo Rojas-Bracho
Consultor y Científico Independiente de Mamíferos Marinos

Rodrigo A. Medellín
Profesor Titular, Instituto de Ecología, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México

Octavio Aburto
Full Professor, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, UC San Diego

Gerardo Ceballos
Investigador Senior, Instituto de Ecología, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México

Arturo Serrano¹
Full Time Professor, Universidad Veracruzana

Peter Auster¹
Research Professor Emeritus, Department of Marine Sciences, Univ. of Connecticut at Avery Point

Robin W. Baird
Research Biologist, Cascadia Research Collective

Robert Baldwin
CEO, One Ocean

Lisa T. Ballance¹
Director, Marine Mammal Institute, Oregon State University

Lance Barrett-Lennard
Senior Research Advisor, Raincoast Conservation Foundation

Simone Baumann-Pickering¹
Professor, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, UC San Diego

Giovanni Bearzi¹
President, Dolphin Biology and Conservation

Maddalena Bearzi¹
President, Ocean Conservation Society

Arne Bjørge*
Scientist Emeritus, Institute of Marine Research

Jaime Bolaños Jiménez¹
Founder, Caribbean-Wide Orca Project

John Calambokidis
Research Biologist, Cascadia Research Collective

Phillip J. Clapham
Senior Scientist, Seastar Scientific Inc.

Yong Chen¹
Professor of Marine Science, Stony Brook University

Donald A. Croll¹
Professor, UC Santa Cruz

Doug DeMaster¹
NOAA Fisheries (retired)

Sarah Dolman
Senior Ocean Campaigner, Environmental Investigation Agency

Antonio Fernandez¹
Veterinary Pathology Professor, University Las Palmas Gran Canaria

Alexandros Frantzis
Scientific Director and President, Pelagos Cetacean Research Institute

Timothy R. Frasier¹
Professor, Saint Mary's University

Mark Gold¹
Director, California Cooperative Oceanic Fisheries Investigations, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, UC San Diego

Charles Greene¹
President-Elect, Ocean Sciences Section, American Geophysical Union

Ellen Hines
Professor Emeritus, San Francisco State University

Sascha Hooker¹
Professor (Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh), University of St Andrews

Erich Hoyt, OBE
Co-Chair, IUCN SSC-WCPA Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force

James Kerry
Chief Scientist, OceanCare

Francine Kershaw
Senior Scientist, Natural Resources Defense Council

Jeremy K. Kiszka¹
Associate Professor, Florida International University

Scott D. Kraus¹
Senior Scientist Emeritus, New England Aquarium

Chloe Malinka¹
Senior Scientist, SMRU Consulting

Janet Mann¹
Distinguished University Professor, Georgetown University

Milton Marcondes¹
Research Director, Instituto Baleia Jubarte

Naomi McIntosh¹
NOAA (retired, 25 years of service)

Richard Merrick¹
Former Chief Science and Director of NOAA Fisheries (retired)
Distinguished Scientist, Gulf of Maine Research Institute

Gianna Minton¹
Independent Scientist, Megaptera Marine Conservation

Kimberly Murray¹
Independent Scientist and Consultant
NOAA Fisheries (retired)

Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara¹
Honorary President, Tethys Research Institute

Simone Panigada¹
President, Tethys Research Institute

Ellen Pikitch¹
Endowed Professor, Stony Brook University

Patrick Pomeroy¹
Research Scientist, Sea Mammal Research Unit, University of St Andrews

Randall Reeves¹
Partner, Okapi Wildlife Associates

Joe Roman
Fellow, Gund Institute for Environment, University of Vermont

Rosalind M. Rolland¹
Senior Scientist Emeritus, Anderson-Cabot Center for Ocean Life, New England Aquarium

Naomi Rose
Senior Scientist, Animal Welfare Institute

Richard Sears
Founder and Director, Mingan Island Cetacean Study

George Shillinger¹
Executive Director, Upwell Turtles

Nataliya R. Shumeyko¹
Regional Coordinator, Caspian Sea, IUCN SSC-WCPA MMPATF Director, Green-Board Information Resource for Conservation of Nature

Mark Peter Simmonds¹
Director of Science, OceanCare

Mariano Sironi
Scientific Director, Instituto de Conservación de Ballenas

Ana Širović¹
Professor, Norwegian University of Science and Technology

Liz Slooten
Professor Emeritus, University of Otago

Christian Sonne¹
Full Professor, Aarhus University

Renata Sousa-Lima¹
Professor, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte

Brandon Southall¹
President and Chief Scientist, Southall Environmental Associates, Inc.

Steven L. Swartz
Senior Cetacean Wildlife Researcher and Co-Director, Gray Whale Research in Mexico

Barbara L. Taylor
Independent Scientist

Dominic Tollit
Senior Marine Mammal Ecologist, Independent Consultant

Els Vermeulen
Associate Professor, University of Pretoria

Sophie von der Heyden¹
Full Professor, Stellenbosch University

John Y. Wang¹
Chief Scientist, CetAsia Research Group

Colleen Weiler¹
Federal Policy Manager, Monterey Bay Aquarium

Lindy Weilgart
Senior Ocean Noise Expert and Independent Policy Consultant

Hal Whitehead
Professor of Biology, Dalhousie University

Bernd Würsig¹
Distinguished Professor Emeritus, Texas A&M University at Galveston

¹Views are those of the individual and not necessarily those of their affiliated institution.