

SHORE STORIES

2018 **IMPACT REPORT**

WORKING FILMS





SHORE STORIES - RELAUNCH

With generous support from the The Putnam Foundation, The Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, and The Oak Foundation, Working Films relaunched the film series Shore Stories in January 2018. The original compilation of shorts helped catalyze and support resistance to opening the East Coast to drilling in 2016. The issue resurfaced with the Trump Administration's plans to expand offshore drilling into new areas including the Arctic, Atlantic, and Pacific Oceans. To oppose these disastrous plans we partnered with Oceana and the Surfrider Foundation to update the collection of films and tour them in coastal communities across the US. Eighty-one community based organizations co-hosted screenings in forty-seven cities, increasing the number of people attending public hearings and speaking out through public comments to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM).

THE FILMS

Since the 2018 proposal aimed to open nearly all of the United States' outer continental shelf to drilling, we updated the films in Shore Stories to include segments from communities newly at risk. We also added new footage to reflect the current political climate and magnitude of the threat. The updated list includes six vivid portraits that highlight both the threats and consequences of oil and gas exploration – including the BP Deepwater Horizon disaster – as well as the grassroots resistance taking place across the US.

PROTECT THE ATLANTIC By Assateague Coastal Trust

SLOW SEASON By John Fiege

AFTER THE SPILL (Excerpt) By Jon Bowermaster

SONIC SEA (Excerpt) By NRDC & Imaginary Forces, with IFAW and Diamond Docs

PROTECTING THE ATLANTIC By Swell Productions for the Surfrider Foundation

WAVE OF OPPOSITION AGAINST OFFSHORE DRILLING By Oceana

BUILDING A GROUNDSWELL OF OPPOSITION

In addition to supporting the local and statewide goals of our grassroots partners in the forty-seven cities and 13 states that hosted screenings, our overarching goal for the campaign was to drive public opposition and comments to BOEM during its public comment period which closed on March 9th 2018. With just over two months to plan and host screenings before the deadline, we teamed up with local and statewide organizations to host as many screenings as possible in this short window.

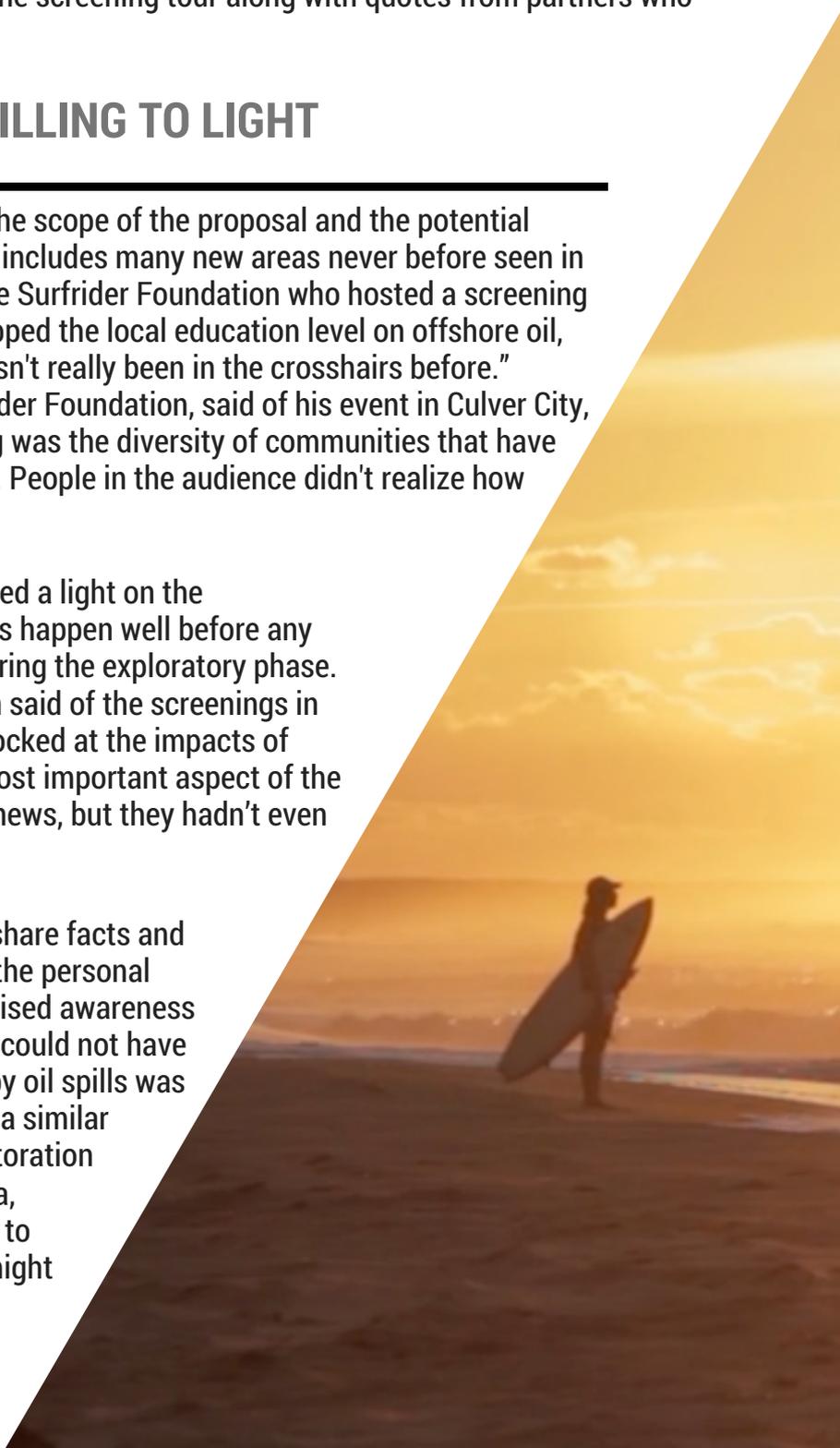
Shore Stories partners reported that our work together helped them reach beyond the choir and provided opportunities for action at a critical time. Audiences gained more depth of the stake of the issue, and were able to vision a future where bureaucratic and monied interests aren't controlling the future of our oceans and the coasts. Below are a few highlights of the screening tour along with quotes from partners who participated in the efforts.

BRINGING THE THREAT OF DRILLING TO LIGHT

For many audience members, learning about the scope of the proposal and the potential consequences was eye opening. The proposal includes many new areas never before seen in a drilling plan. According to Matt Gove with the Surfrider Foundation who hosted a screening in Long Beach, NY, "the screening definitely upped the local education level on offshore oil, especially somewhere like New York which hasn't really been in the crosshairs before." Echoing this, Graham Hamilton with the Surfrider Foundation, said of his event in Culver City, CA, "The biggest take away from the screening was the diversity of communities that have been or will be affected by offshore oil drilling. People in the audience didn't realize how pervasive the threat could be."

Two of the films featured in Shore Stories shined a light on the ramifications of seismic testing. These impacts happen well before any drill rigs show up as the testing takes place during the exploratory phase. As Briana Goodwin of the Surfrider Foundation said of the screenings in Oregon, "people at all four screenings were shocked at the impacts of offshore oil exploration. I think that was the most important aspect of the film, people remember seeing oil spills on the news, but they hadn't even considered the impacts of exploration."

The films and discussions did more than just share facts and figures, many in our audience were moved by the personal stories shared by those featured. "The films raised awareness in a way that having staff make presentations could not have done. Hearing the voices of people impacted by oil spills was very impactful," said Briana Goodwin. Sharing a similar sentiment, Christian Wagley with the Gulf Restoration Network, said of the three screenings in Florida, "films are a great way to bring people together to take action, and I think we reach people who might not come to an event that is just a person presenting. Films are powerful, enjoyable, educational, and inspiring!"





LIGHTS, DISCUSSION, ACTION!

The most important part of a film screening is what happens when the lights come up, after an audience has been moved by what they've seen. At all of the Shore Stories screenings, our partners hosted discussions with the audience members, answering questions about local impacts and most importantly, what they can do to resist offshore drilling. Because these events took place prior to the March 9th deadline for public comments, many screening hosts used the opportunity to walk audiences through the process of submitting comments right then and there. Laptops were set up, postcards were filed out; if an audience member had an opinion about drilling, BOEM received it. According to Sandra Meola with the NY/NJ Baykeeper and the host of the Shore Stories screening in Red Bank, NJ, "the audience was very sobered by the film and discussion and they were inspired and asked how they can help and get involved. We had laptops at the venue and folks immediately submitted comments after the film."

Submitting comments to BOEM was a common occurrence at screenings but far from the only action. Many screenings hosts used the opportunity to form groups to continue working on the issue well after the event. Brady Bradshaw with Oceana, said of the screening in Encinitas, CA, "After the Q+A we tried something new: three breakout groups. About 80 people joined breakout groups, collectively. [Our co-host] Surfrider STOP Committee gathered a huge group and went over tactics to pressure [US Representative] Darrell Issa to send a letter to BOEM. [Our other co-host] Sierra Club Coasters formed a group that would turn up the heat on Carlsbad City Council to join other cities in a resolution, and California State San Marcos Ocean Conservation Club gained connections to community members from San Marcos to work on the first inland resolution."



Shore Stories Post-Screening Breakout Group.



Shore Stories Post-Screening Breakout Group.

OUT OF THE SEATS & INTO THE STREETS!

Environmental & social justice filmmakers hope that their audiences continue to be involved in taking action long after seeing their film. Usually, it's hard to gauge this level of impact because the opportunities for meaningful action are few and sometimes months or years after their film is in front of an audience. This was not the case with *Shore Stories*. We had a unique opportunity to witness continued involvement of audiences as many mobilized in advance of the March 9th public comment deadline. While the screenings themselves were full of actions, the efforts were dwarfed by the continued engagement demonstrated by audiences well after the events.

Many screenings hosts were contacted after the screenings with audience members looking for next steps. Jacob Oblander with the Savannah Riverkeeper, who hosted a screening in Savannah GA explained, "I've already had folks reaching out to us about public comment and community action." Similarly, Matt Gove with Surfrider Foundation shared, "people [have] contacted me to try and pass local anti oil drilling resolutions after the event."

Submitting comments was only one aspect of BOEM's public comment period. There were also in-person meetings held by BOEM which *Shore Stories* audience members traveled to after their screenings to express their opposition to drilling. Brice Boland with the Surfrider Foundation, said, "[at our Tacoma screening] carpools were discussed to Olympia for the BOEM meeting and I was approached at the BOEM meeting by people who attended the screening that I did not know which was great. The Olympia showing had a much higher density of ocean and political knowledge participants so the conversation was less Q&A and more dialogue about going to the BOEM meeting and our associated people's hearing to give oral comment. At least ten who were at the screening attended." Hannah Funk with the Public Interest Network, said of her screening at Georgetown, "After the screening, Georgetown students in GREEN, the university's premier environmental club, traveled to BOEM's public hearing and left comments opposing the offshore drilling plan. We were definitely motivated to do this in large part by the screening, especially by the emphasis on political activism that *Shore Stories* communicates."



BOEM meetings weren't the only place where we witnessed continued action by audience members. Many screening hosts planned other opportunities to get new individuals involved in their campaigns. Ogeechee Riverkeeper, Simona Perry, said of her screening in Richmond Hill, "we reached about 60 people. But, I know that number was magnified by folks who went out the very next day to get petitions signed to the governor to stand against offshore drilling." Andrew Christie with the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club said, "the California Coastal Commission met here 4 days later [after our screening]. Every person in this picture of that meeting deliberating on the Commission's comments to BOEM is holding up one of the #protectourcoast signs that we printed out and distributed (and rehearsed this move with) at the February 3rd Shore Stories event." Both of these photos can be seen below.



February 3rd Shore Stories Screening.



February 7th California Coastal Commission Meeting

Passing local resolutions against offshore drilling was another common goal for many of our screening hosts. Several partners have reported an increase in volunteers helping them pass these resolutions. In at least two locations, our partners have already been successful. Briana Goodwin with the Surfrider Foundation said, "in Newport, a volunteer was inspired to testify at the Port of Toledo and Port of Newport Commission meetings and request that they pass resolutions against offshore drilling (which they did!)."

WAVE OF OPPOSITION CONTINUES TO SWELL

While the 2018 tour of Shore Stories was initially aimed at hosting as many events as possible before the March 9th deadline, we have continued to fulfill dozens of screening requests. The current public comment period has closed, but our partners continue to mobilize and bring new constituencies into their campaigns. Film continues to be an important tool in building this opposition. As Jacob Oblander said in an interview with Connect Savannah, "There's a reason Working Films does this. It's more palatable to people to come to an event, watch a 30-minute movie, and ask questions instead of going, 'Here's 400 pages on offshore drilling and leasing contracts.'" We are grateful for the support of the The Putnam Foundation, The Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, and The Oak Foundation, which made Shore Stories possible.