

Ministero dell'Ambiente
Direzione per la Salvaguardia Ambientale del Ministero dell'Ambiente e della
Tutela del Territorio e del Mare - Divisione III
Attenzione: Concessione d364 CR AX - Audax Energy
Via Cristoforo Colombo, 44
00147 – Roma

e p.c. : Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali
Direzione Generale per la Qualità e la Tutela del Paesaggio e l'Arte
Contemporanea
Via San Michele, 22
00153 - Roma

Dear representatives of the Italian government:

On behalf of the Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition, we are writing to you to recommend that authorization be denied to the drilling permit d30 BC MD off the coast of Abruzzo, as filed to your offices by Mediterranean Oil and Gas, based in London.

The so called “Ombrina Mare” permit would allow a British company to drill 5 oil wells, install an FPSO and a series of pipelines roughly 4 miles from shore for the purpose of extracting and treating heavy sour oil.

The lease is located along one of the most beautiful parts of the Adriatic sea, in a pristine area, beloved by locals and tourists, which include beachgoers and bicyclists alike. A fishing nursery is located within the lease, and the entire area is set to be an integral part of the future Costa dei Trabocchi National Park. Both efforts have received financing from the EU. We are especially concerned about preserving the potential for the “Bike to Coast ” program, also sponsored by the EU, which, at 130 kilometers, would create the largest bicycle path in Europe, from Martinsicuro to San Salvo along the previous railroad track and with spectacular views of the sea. The total coast of the project is estimated at 33 million euros.

The presence of Ombrina Mare at sea -- with its oil rigs and offshore storage and processing ship -- would create unnecessary risks and expose the area to pollution and spills. The infrastructure necessary for the development of Ombrina will be clearly visible from shore, polluting chemicals will be used, large quantities of wastewaters will have to be transported and treated onshore, and fishing activities will be affected. Most of all, the presence of the FPSO ship, with its 24 hours a day gas-flaring of toxic residuals from oil operations, is certainly not compatible with a biking path, and other touristic attractions along the coast.

The people who live along the coast of Abruzzo stand to gain very little in return for the irreversible transformation of their coastline into an oil-processing site, since the oil will be sold on the open market and since Italian royalties are among the lowest in the world – about 4% of all profits, which will mostly end up in Roman coffers.



The “Bike to Coast” project – 130 kilometers along the sea

On a larger scale, extracting and burning fossil fuels is one of the main causes of climate change. As a biking organization we are trying to raise awareness on the need to move away from the current paradigm of a fossil-fuel based society and towards a greater use of renewable energy. Indeed, this was the main theme of our recently completed 320 mile ride along the California coast, called “Climate Ride” . We strongly believe the real solution to our current climate and energy crisis is not to drill sensitive areas such as the Abruzzo coastline, but to innovate, become more efficient and find creative solutions.

We sincerely wish all the best for the Abruzzo people, the Costa dei Trabocchi National Park, and for the “Bike to Coast” project, which we hope to one day bike along.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erik Mar', with a period at the end.

Erik Mar, Architect, LEED® AP BD+C

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