



The Honorable Ryan Zinke
US Secretary of the Interior
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke,

We are 220 state legislators representing 16 coastal states, and we are writing to you to oppose the Proposed National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program for 2019-2024 (Proposed Leasing Program). This proposal seeks to exponentially expand oil and gas exploration, production, and drilling in the Atlantic Ocean, Pacific Ocean, and Gulf of Mexico, which for many of us, represents the first time in decades our coasts would be exposed to such development. While these oil and gas reserves are technically recoverable, we urge you to consider the repercussions, as you have done so in Florida, to local and regional economies and ecosystems.

We are encouraged by your recent action to remove Florida's coasts from the Proposed Leasing Program, a decision based on potential threats that offshore drilling would impose on coastal tourism, the recreational economy, and the hundreds of thousands of jobs that depend upon it. Given that one state has been removed from the program, we strongly urge you to grant other states the same opportunity to protect their economy and coastal and marine resources.

Coastal tourism, fisheries, shipping, and defense are not only critical economic drivers in Florida, but are the underpinning of all U.S. coastal states – states that provide 45 percent of our nation's gross domestic product¹. For example, California, Oregon, and Washington alone represent the fifth largest economy *in the world*, a level of prosperity that would not be achieved without their ocean-dependent industries. Given this information, it is clear that U.S. coastlines are a fundamental part of the nation's economic activity and would be threatened by the offshore drilling plan.

Offshore exploration, construction, and drilling can damage marine habitats and injure or kill the animals in the surrounding area through direct impact and altering of light and sound environments.

¹ NOAA <https://toolkit.climate.gov/topics/marine/fisheries-and-coastal-communities>

² TIME Magazine <http://time.com/3748246/exxon-valdez-history/>

³ Columbia University <http://bit.ly/2rlf3vh>

⁴ TIME Magazine <http://content.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,1986323,00.html>

The significant impacts associated with offshore oil and gas development pale in comparison to the impacts associated with those of oil spills. Examples from across the country highlight the irreparable damage inflicted upon coastal communities and ecosystems due to these accidents. After the Exxon Valdez oil tanker crashed in Alaska's Prince William Sound in 1989, 11 million gallons of oil spilled and polluted over 1000 miles of coastline. This spill decimated the environment, killing thousands of salmon, otters, and eagles, as well as a quarter of a million seabirds². In 2005, Hurricane Katrina caused over 40 spills and 8 million gallons of expelled oil. One of the most significant accidents during the hurricane was the Murphy Oil Refinery spill, which released over 1 million gallons of oil, contaminating flood waters and harming over 1000 adjacent homes³.

The 2010 Deepwater Horizon spill in the Gulf of Mexico alone – which resulted in 210*million* gallons of oil entering the Gulf and caused billions of dollars in damage to local fisheries and tourism industries⁴ – provides ample evidence that accidents can and do happen. As these examples highlight, no amount of planning or resources could fully mitigate the harm done to animals, fisheries, tourism, and the economy in the event of an accident. However, the probability of these spills occurring only increases if U.S. coastlines are opened to offshore drilling under the Proposed Leasing Program.

The Proposed Leasing Program claims that these new oil and gas projects will create jobs and bolster the U.S. economy, but with the risk of spills, and the threats of exploration and production alone, the Program will ultimately hurt coastal economies', and that of their entire states, more than it will benefit them.

Our coastlines serve as a significant economic driver that is entirely dependent upon healthy marine life and coastal ecosystems. Not only will offshore drilling hurt state economies, but this construction would also negatively affect diverse ecosystems and fishing and shipping sectors. Considering this threat to coastal ecosystems and economies, we oppose the Proposed Leasing Program and urge you to at least grant all coastal states with the opportunity to opt out of these leases. We are heartened by your exemption of Florida and hope you take our request into consideration. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Senator Kevin Ranker
Washington

Assemblyman Thomas Abinanti
New York

Representative John Ager
North Carolina

Senator Kevin de León
California

Senator Ricardo Lara
California

Senator Susan Lee
Maryland

Senator Ben Allen
California

Representative Sherry Appleton
Washington

Representative David Arconti
Connecticut

Representative John Autry
North Carolina

Representative Phil Barnhart
Oregon

Chairman Kumar Barve
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North Carolina

Senator Shenna Bellows
Maine

Assemblyman Daniel Benson
New Jersey

Representative Jennifer Benson
Massachusetts

Representative Lori Berman
Florida

Representative Seth Berry
Maine

Senator Andy Billig
Washington

Representative Deborah Boone
Oregon

Delegate Jennifer Boysko
Virginia

Senator Cathy Breen
Maine

Representative Cecil Brockman
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Assemblyman David Buchwald

Representative Chris Lee
Hawaii

Representative Matthew Lesser
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Senator Lynwood Lewis
Virginia

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Maryland

Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton
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Hawaii

Representative Nicole Lowen
Hawaii

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Maryland

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Senator James Manning
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Senator David Marsden
Virginia

Representative Pam Marsh
Oregon

Representative Grier Martin
North Carolina

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New York

Senator John McCoy

New York
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North Carolina
Senator Jeanine Calkin
Rhode Island
Senator Reuven Carlyle
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Delegate Al Carr
Maryland
Representative Lauren Carson
Rhode Island
Senator Stanley Chang
Hawaii
Representative Mike Chapman
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Senator Maralyn Chase
Washington
Representative Eileen Cody
Washington
Assemblyman Herb Conway
New Jersey
Representative Janice Cooper
Maine
Representative Richard Creagan
Hawaii
Senator Julian Cyr
Massachusetts
Senator Jeannie Dameille
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Representative Matthea Daughtry
Maine
Senator Michael Dembrow
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Representative Michael Devin
Maine
Senator Manka Dhingra

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New Jersey
Representative Susan McLain
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Senator Jeremy McPike
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Senator Rebecca Millett
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Senator Dave Miramant
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Representative Howard Moffet
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Senator William Monning
California
Delegate David Moon
Maryland
Representative Marcia Morey
North Carolina
Delegate Dan Morhaim
Maryland
Senator Sharon Nelson
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Oregon
Assistant Speaker Felix Ortiz
New York
Representative Lillian Ortiz-Self
Washington
Representative Tina Orwall
Washington
Representative Ed Osienski
Delaware
Assemblyman Anthony Palumbo
New York
Senator Guy Palumbo

Washington

Senator Patrick Diegnan
New Jersey

Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz
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Rhode Island

Representative Michelle DuBois
Massachusetts

Assemblymember Steve Englebright
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Representative Julie Fahey
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Maine

Representative Ryan Fecteau
Maine

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Mike Gabbard
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Representative Cedric Gates
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Speaker Sara Gideon
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Representative Rosa Gill
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Representative David Gomberg
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Assemblymember Richard Gottfried
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Representative Patricia Haddad
Massachusetts

Representative Jim Handy
Maine

Representative Edward Hanes
North Carolina

Representative Pricey Harrison
North Carolina

Senator Bob Hasegawa
Washington

Delegate Anne Healey
Maryland

Representative Jonathan Hecht
Massachusetts

Representative Debra Heffernan
Delaware

Senator Robert Hertzberg
California

Representative Natalie Higgins
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Representative Paul Holvey
Oregon

Delegate Patrick Hope
Virginia

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Maine

Senator Sam Hunt
Washington

Representative Patty Hymanson
Maine

Representative Kristin Jacobs

Washington

Delegate Dana Stein
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Senator Steiner Hayward
Oregon

Senator Henry Stern
California

Assemblymember Mark Stone
California

Senator Cynthia Stone Creem
Massachusetts

Delegate Rip Sullivan
Virginia

Senator Scott Surovell
Virginia

Representative Roy Takumi
Hawaii

Representative Gael Tarleton
Washington

Representative Maureen Terry
Maine

Representative Steve Tharinger
Washington

Senator Laura Thielen
Hawaii

Assemblyman Fred Thiele
New York

Representative Cynthia Thielen
Hawaii

Representative Dawn Thomas
Washington

Assemblymember Phil Ting
California

Representative Ryan Tipping
Maine

Representative Carlos Tobon

Florida

Representative Evan Jenne
Florida

Representative Aaron Johanson
Hawaii

Representative Erik Jorgensen
Maine

Representative Ruth Kagi
Washington

Senator Karen Keiser
Washington

Representative Alissa Keny-Guyer
Oregon

Representative Christine Kilduff
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Representative Shelley Kloba
Washington

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Maryland

Delegate Clarence Lam
Maryland

Rhode Island

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Representative Javier Valdez
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Delaware

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