

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 19, 2018

The Honorable Larry Hogan
Governor
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401-1925

Dear Governor Hogan:

We are writing to encourage you to engage President Donald Trump and Department of the Interior (DOI) Secretary Ryan Zinke to negotiate exempting Maryland's coasts from the Administration's draft proposed five-year offshore drilling plan.

On January 4, 2018, Secretary Zinke announced that they would be including nearly all federal waters in the National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program for 2019 to 2024, including the Atlantic Ocean. This proposal would end a thirty year ban on drilling in the Atlantic. Little more than a week later, on January 9, Secretary Zinke announced in a statement that the State of Florida and the Eastern Gulf of Mexico would be removed from consideration for any new oil and gas drilling permits. Secretary Zinke stated that after taking "into consideration the local and state voice" he concluded Florida is "unique and its coasts are heavily reliant on tourism as an economic driver."

Maryland's coastal resources are just as economically and ecologically valuable as those in Florida. Allowing offshore oil and gas drilling anywhere on the East Coast would pose a serious threat to the vibrancy of Maryland's coastal communities, tourism industry and businesses that rely on a clean and healthy Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean. Allowing drilling in the Atlantic puts the largest estuary in America and a multi-billion-dollar economic catalyst that spans 7 states, at risk of an oil spill the same magnitude and size as the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill. As we saw in the Gulf, it would be states like Maryland and other watershed states who bear the brunt of such a disaster. Using your connections and influence in the Trump administration, we are optimistic that lending your voice on this issue and having a strong unified front will lead DOI to grant the same type of exception to other states including Maryland.

Opening our coasts to offshore drilling and rolling back safety regulations on oil and gas development, as the Trump Administration has aggressively pushed for the last year, endangers our coastal communities and the Chesapeake Bay. The threat of oil spills - whether small leaks or a major disaster akin to the Deepwater Horizon - raises serious questions about the ultimate cost and value for offshore drilling. As a nation, we should be focused on creating sustainable jobs, diversifying our energy infrastructure, supporting the development of new technologies and fighting climate change. Maryland has and continues to demonstrate leadership on this issue, including the approval of the largest offshore wind projects in the country that would reduce

carbon dioxide emissions by 19,000 tons a year while generating nearly 1000 MW of clean energy.

The Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act gives significant weight to the opinions of the Governors of the coastal states where leases are considered. We hope you will join us in demanding that oil and gas drilling is kept off our coasts by asking Secretary Zinke to withdraw Maryland's shoreline from the National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program for 2019 to 2024.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to working with you on this critical issue to our state.



Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress

Sincerely,



Steny H. Hoyer
Member of Congress



Elijah Cummings
Member of Congress



C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger
Member of Congress



John Sarbanes
Member of Congress



John K. Delaney
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress