

Fish, Game and Forestry Committee

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August 10, 2017

Dr. Walter Cruickshank – Acting Director
U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Dr. Cruickshank:

We, the undersigned members of the South Carolina General Assembly, are writing to express our strong opposition to the inclusion of the Mid and South Atlantic planning areas in the 2019-2024 National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program.

The State of South Carolina is proud of our successful efforts to preserve the natural beauty that makes our state unique. We cannot afford to risk our natural beauty, distinctive sense of place, fragile ecology, and the multitude of outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities for the purported benefits of offshore oil and gas drilling. Doing so would be a step backward for our great state.

South Carolina's booming coastal tourism industry employs more than 80,000 South Carolinians and contributes over \$7 billion to the state by attracting tourists to our pristine beaches and coastal landscapes. The quality of life we enjoy along our coast is a significant driver of economic growth opportunities, attracting international manufacturers as well as new residents.

Very little has been done to make offshore drilling safer in the seven years since the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig exploded in the Gulf of Mexico, killing 11 people and pumping more than 200 million gallons of oil into the ocean. Our coastal communities, including the culturally-rich fishing areas and tourist attractions of Charleston, Beaufort, Hilton Head, and Myrtle Beach, to name just a few, would be both economically and environmentally devastated by any oil spill occurring off the East Coast of the United States.

There is simply no place along our coast where drilling makes sense. Make no mistake; industrializing our coastline would be devastating to our state. The infrastructure necessary to support the oil and gas industry would not mix with the residential and resort development or wildlife refuges and extensive protected ecosystems like the ACE Basin that form our coastline.

South Carolina's coastal communities are united in opposition to offshore drilling -- as are many state and local leaders. Over 24 municipalities and counties in South Carolina have adopted resolutions

officially opposing offshore drilling. The Gullah/Geechee Nation and South Carolina Small Business Chamber of Commerce have also passed resolutions opposing offshore drilling and exploration, and over 400 business owners in our state have signed on to a letter opposing offshore drilling. Coastal Congressmen Mark Sanford and Tom Rice, as well as Governor Henry McMaster, have also vocally opposed offshore drilling.

We, the undersigned, oppose oil and gas development off the South Carolina coast and urge you to remove South Carolina, as well as all waters along the East Coast, from consideration for offshore drilling in the 2019-2024 National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program.

Respectfully,



Senator George E. "Chip" Campsen, III
R - District 43



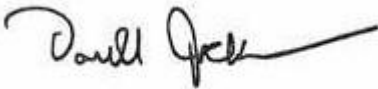
Representative William Wheeler, III
D – District 50



Representative Mandy Powers Norrell
D – District 44



Representative Micajah P. Caskey, IV
R – District 89



Senator Darrell Jackson
D – District 21



Representative Beth Bernstein
D – District 78



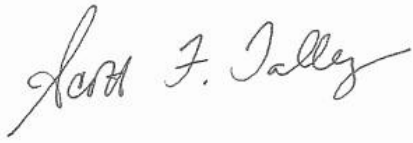
Representative William Clyburn
D – District 82



Senator Greg Gregory
R – District 16



Senator Brad Hutto
D – District 40



Senator Scott Talley
R – District 12



Senator J. Thomas McElveen, III
D – District 35



Senator Marlon Kimpson
D – District 42



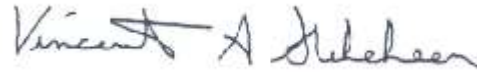
Representative Shannon Erickson
R – District 124



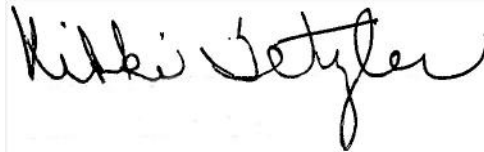
Representative Lee Hewitt
R – District 108



Representative Robert Brown
D – District 116



Senator Vincent Sheheen
D – District 27



Senator Nikki Setzler
D – District 26



Representative Leon Stavrinakis
D – District 119




Representative William G. Herbkersman
R – District 118



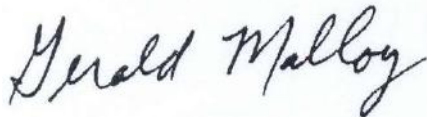
Representative Wm. Weston J. Newton
R – District 120



Senator Sandy Senn
R – District 41



Senator Mia S. McLeod
D – District 22



Senator Gerald Malloy
D – District 29



Senator Luke Rankin
R – District 33



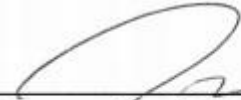
Senator Tom Davis
R – District 46



Representative R. Michael Sottile
R – District 112



Representative Leola Robinson-Simpson
D – District 25



Representative J Todd Rutherford
D- District 74



Representative Gary Clary
R – District 3



Representative James E. Smith
D – District 72



Representative G. Murrell Smith, Jr.
R - District 67



Representative William Cogswell
R – District 110