



The Advocate of South Carolina Small Business
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August 17, 2017

Kelly Hammerle
National Program Manager
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM)
45600 Woodland Road, Mailstop VAM-LD
Sterling, Virginia 20166

Re: Response to BOEM's Request for Information and Comments on Preparation of 2019-2024
National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program MAA10400

Dear Ms. Hammerle:

The South Carolina Small Business Chamber of Commerce is a 5000+ member organization advocating for the general interests of the state's small businesses.

Our state coastal tourism economy is essentially a small business economy. Add in our commercial fishing and coastal recreation industries and South Carolina has 79,000 jobs and \$4.4 billion in GDP dependent on a healthy ocean that would be threatened by offshore oil drilling.

We agree with our Republican Governor, Henry McMaster, and our three Congressional House members who represent our coast—Tom Rice (R), James Clyburn (D) and Mark Sanford (R)—who are openly opposing offshore oil drilling in the Atlantic. They are joined by every municipal coastal government in South Carolina, tens of thousands of citizens, numerous environmental organizations and businesses across our state in strong opposition to allowing the leasing of any area of the Atlantic outer continental shelf for the drilling of oil.

Our nation's experience with offshore drilling in the Gulf of Mexico and Pacific have taught all of us that every oil rig, even if just a test well like Deepwater Horizon, will leak and spill. No new technology will ever be 100 percent effective in the prevention of these incidents. In addition, data from the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement shows that about 20 percent of all outer continental shelf oil leaks/spills are due to human error.

The bottom line is that allowing offshore drilling in the Atlantic equals oil washing ashore and fowling our pristine beaches and coastlines. The only question is how much oil and what will be the cost to our economy. There can be no harmony between offshore oil drilling and our robust coastal economy. They are incompatible.

It is not only the threat of oil spills and leaks that jeopardizes our state's economy. According to Mr. Andy Radford, senior policy adviser for the American Petroleum Institute (The Greenville News, April 21, 2017), oil development in the Atlantic would require "zoned industrialized areas".

It would be difficult to find any coastal community in South Carolina willing to give up its tourism and residential areas for dirty oil industrialization. South Carolina State Senator Chip Campsen (R-Charleston), wrote over two years ago (Charleston Post and Courier, March 30, 2015) about his opposition to offshore oil drilling in the Atlantic by referencing his experience as the owner of a passenger vessel company:

In the process of building and delivering my above referenced vessels from the Gulf of Mexico I have observed firsthand the land-based infrastructure necessary to support offshore drilling. It is not a pretty sight. It is extensive, dirty and highly industrial. There simply is no place on South Carolina's coast appropriate for this kind of industrialization. Our coast is dominated by residential and resort development, wildlife refuges and extensive protected ecosystems such as the ACE Basin and Santee Delta. Offshore oil's land-based infrastructure would not mix well with current coastal land uses.

This is not who South Carolina is. We are not the Gulf Coast. We don't envy or aspire to be the Gulf Coast.

No money from revenue sharing, even if it became a reality, could possibly compensate for the inevitable destruction of our coastal lands and waters. Nor could any minimal economic benefit replace the loss of our nationally-cultivated image of a state that offers family vacations at unspoiled beaches, historic cities, luxurious resorts and protected ecological havens.

As the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and the Department of Interior finalizes a decision on opening up the Atlantic to offshore drilling, remember that this is a forever decision. The Atlantic Ocean, its marine animals and our coastal economies will never be the same if drilling is ever allowed.

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke is quoted (The Washington Post, March 2, 2017) as saying, "I approach this job the same way that Boy Scouts taught me so long ago: leave the campsite in better condition than I found it."

If we are to leave our Atlantic Coast "campsite" in better condition than we found it, we cannot do so by allowing offshore drilling.

Sincerely,



Frank Knapp Jr.
President and CEO