

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 08, 2018

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

Dear Secretary Zinke:

We write to request that New York State be exempted from consideration of new oil and gas drilling leases as part of the recently announced Draft Proposed Program for the 2019-2024 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program. This plan would open up two lease sales in areas of the North Atlantic coast adjacent to New York State for fossil fuel exploration.

New York's almost 2,000 miles of tidal coastline are unique and important to our economy that includes industries such as tourism, shipping, construction, fishing and living resources. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, New York has the third largest ocean economy with 20,894 businesses, employing more than 350,000 workers, paying over \$11 billion in wages, and contributing over \$24 billion to the state's gross domestic product.

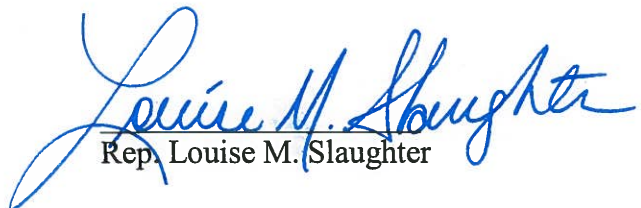
New oil and gas development raises the possibility of a disastrous oil spill and increases risk of exposure to toxic chemicals and metals used in offshore drilling operations. These threats to New Yorkers' coastal industries, public health, and unique natural environments are unacceptable and should not be ignored. The long-term health of New York is inextricably linked to protecting our ocean resources. For this reason our state has invested in improving water quality, restoring aquatic ecosystems, and developing renewable energy.

The Draft Proposed Program exposes our precious aquatic ecosystems to degradation and threatens our investments. Local voices across our state, including our Governor, have spoken up in opposition to this new offshore drilling plan, which we do not want and do not need. We respectfully request that local and state voices in New York seeking exemption from new oil and gas leasing be given the same consideration afforded to those in other states, such as Florida. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand



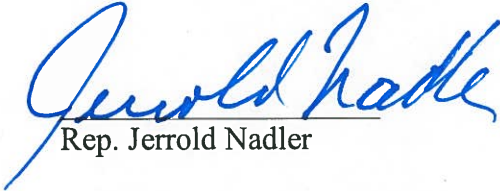
Rep. Louise M. Slaughter



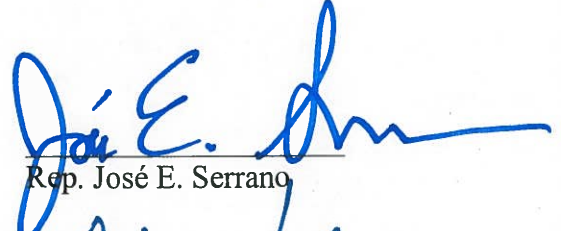
Sen. Charles E. Schumer



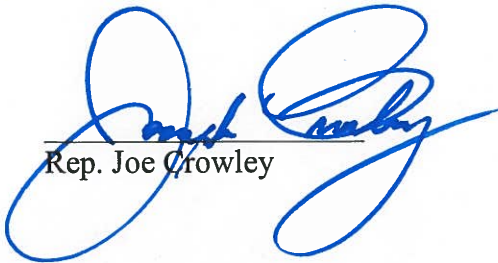
Rep. Lee Zeldin



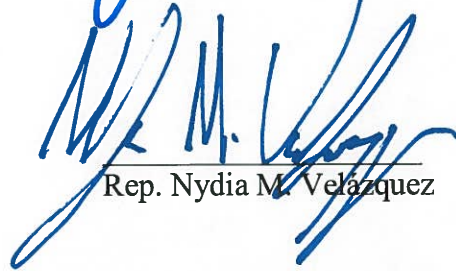
Rep. Jerrold Nadler



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