



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

Dear Secretary Zinke,

As a united group of 227 state legislators representing 17 coastal states, 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. NOAA reports that coastal communities alone provide 45 percent of our nation's gross domestic product. Furthermore, California, Oregon, and Washington combined represent the fifth largest economy *in the world*, a level of prosperity that would not be achieved without their ocean-dependent industries. 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. 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

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>

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 seabirds ². 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 homes ³.

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 industries ⁴– 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 Ben Allen
California

Representative Sherry Appleton
Washington

Representative David Arconti
Connecticut

Senator Kevin de León
California

Senator Ricardo Lara
California

Senator Susan Lee
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Representative Chris Lee
Hawaii

Representative Matthew Lesser
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Delegate Robbyn Lewis
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Assemblyman Daniel Benson
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Representative Jennifer Benson
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Representative Lori Berman
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Maine

Representative Cecil Brockman
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Representative Robert Brown
South Carolina

Assemblyman David Buchwald
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Hawaii

Representative Nicole Lowen
Hawaii

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Maryland

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Oregon

Senator James Manning
Oregon

Senator David Marsden
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Representative Pam Marsh
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Representative Grier Martin
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Senator John McCoy
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Assemblyman John McKeon
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Senator Maralyn Chase
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Maine

Representative Richard Creagan
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Senator Chuck Riley
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Representative June Robinson
Washington

Senator Christine Rolfes
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Maryland

Senator Russell Ruderman
Hawaii

Honorable Rick Russman
New Hampshire

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Mike Gabbard
Hawaii

Representative Cedric Gates
Hawaii

Speaker Sara Gideon
Maine

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Rhode Island

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Assemblymember Richard Gottfried
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Representative Mia Gregerson
Washington

Representative Marty Grohman
Maine

Assemblymember Reed Gusciora
New Jersey

Representative Patricia Haddad
Massachusetts

Representative Jim Handy
Maine

Representative Edward Hanes
North Carolina

Representative Cindy Ryu
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Representative Andrea Salinas
Oregon

Senator Rebecca Saldana
Washington

Senator Adam Satchell
Rhode Island

Representative John Schneck
Maine

Representative Mike Sells
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Representative Tana Senn
Washington

Representative Bryon Short
Delaware

Senator Troy Singleton
New Jersey

Senator Bob Smith
New Jersey

Senator Will Smith
Maryland

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Massachusetts

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Maryland

Representative Janeen Sollman
Oregon

Representative Joseph Solomon Jr.
Rhode Island

Representative Derek Stanford
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Maryland

Senator Steiner Hayward
Oregon

Senator Henry Stern
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Representative Pricey Harrison
North Carolina

Senator Bob Hasegawa
Washington

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Maryland

Representative Jonathan Hecht
Massachusetts

Representative Debra Heffernan
Delaware

Senator Robert Hertzberg
California

Representative Natalie Higgins
Massachusetts

Representative Paul Holvey
Oregon

Delegate Patrick Hope
Virginia

Representative Brian Hubbell
Maine

Senator Sam Hunt
Washington

Representative Patty Hymanson
Maine

Representative Verla Insko
North Carolina

Representative Kristin Jacobs
Florida

Representative Evan Jenne
Florida

Representative Aaron Johanson
Hawaii

Representative Erik Jorgensen
Maine

Representative Ruth Kagi
Washington

Senator Karen Keiser
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Assemblymember Mark Stone
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Senator Cynthia Stone Creem
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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
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Assemblymember Phil Ting
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Representative Ryan Tipping
Maine

Representative Carlos Tobon
Rhode Island

Representative Brian Turner
North Carolina

Representative Javier Valdez
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Senator Terry Van Duyn
North Carolina

Senator Eloise Vitelli
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Oregon

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Washington

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Washington

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Delaware

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Representative Sharon Wylie
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Senator Craig Zucker
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