

**SOUTHERN
NEW JERSEY
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**



South Jersey's Voice for Progress

March 6, 2018

Ms. Kelly Hammerle, Chief, National Oil and Gas Leasing Program
Development and Coordination Branch, Leasing Division
Office of Strategic Resources, BOEM (VAM-LD)
45600 Woodland Road
Mailstop VAM-LD
Sterling, VA 20166-9216

VIA: Email www.regulations.gov BOEM-2017-0074-0001.

Dear Ms. Hammerle:

This letter is written to oppose the Draft Proposed Program [DDP] for the 2019-2024 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program. This plan would include all of Atlantic Ocean from Main to Florida, more particularly including the waters off New Jersey within 3 miles of its beaches.

The physical, hydrodynamic and biological characteristics of the ocean off the Jersey Shore are unique hosting more than 300 species of fish, some 350 species of birds and many other marine mammals including whales and dolphins.

Proposed seismic air guns fire intense blasts of compressed air, one of the loudest man-made sounds in the ocean; exploratory and commercial drilling, extraction, and transportation of offshore oil and gas resources [with a risk of an oil spills and chronic leakage} along with other significant onshore infrastructure, such as pipelines or refineries, will cause substantial environmental impacts to a pristine and sensitive New Jersey coast line.

These offshore drilling activities pose threats to treasured vacation destinations on New Jersey's Coasts, which are of intrinsic economic value for numerous industries. Further, essential nursery habitats for recreational and commercial fisheries are at risk as well as natural buffers from storm surge and hurricanes.

On behalf of the Southern New Jersey Development Council's 8 southern counties and its municipalities and businesses, we oppose offshore oil and gas exploration and drilling activities that affect the coast of New Jersey.

Thank you for your attention.

Marlene Z Asselta

Marlene Z Asselta, President
Southern New Jersey Development Council

C: NJ Congressional Delegation
NJ Governor Philip Murphy