

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 24, 2013

The Honorable Sally Jewell  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C St NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Jewell:

First, let us congratulate you on your appointment and confirmation as Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior. We know that you will have a wide range of issues to address in your new role, and we are writing regarding our nation's offshore energy policy – particularly as it affects the Atlantic Coast.

Governors from our three states recently wrote to you urging exploration of oil and gas resources on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). We are writing to make clear that this is not a consensus view, either among our state's elected leaders or among our state's citizens.

OCS drilling is, in fact, quite controversial in our states because of its potential adverse impacts both on the environment and on our coastal communities and the tourism economy on which they depend. As you know, the Interior Department's 2012-2017 OCS Gas Leasing Program recognized the risks of drilling off the Atlantic Coast and deferred oil and gas leasing in the region. In its justification, the agency cited a "lack of infrastructure to support oil and gas exploration and development as well as spill preparedness and response." As the 2010 Deepwater Horizon disaster demonstrated tragically, sufficient spill preparedness is crucial to a successful offshore drilling operation. There are also national security concerns to be weighed as our armed forces and NASA maintain extensive and exclusive use of ocean space of the East Coast for training and testing activities.

We recognize that the United States will continue to rely on fossil fuels to meet its near-term energy needs. However, current estimates of the scope of Atlantic OCS oil and gas reserves make clear that the risks of drilling in this sensitive region outweigh the benefits. Instead of relying on a finite domestic supply of oil, our national energy policy should be reoriented toward renewable sources that can meet our long term energy needs. This includes the development of renewable energy along the Atlantic Coast, and we appreciate your efforts to advance this development.

We therefore urge you to continue to use extreme caution when considering any proposals to allow drilling off the Atlantic Coast, and to focus our energy policy instead on developing alternative energy sources that do not post the same economic and environmental risks as drilling. We look forward to working with you in promoting policies that put our country on a path towards energy independence and move us towards a clean energy economy.

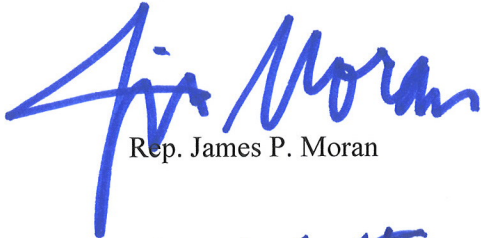
Sincerely,



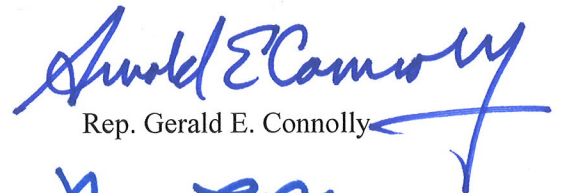
Rep. David Price



Rep. Melvin L. Watt



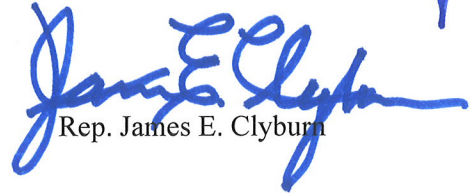
Rep. James P. Moran



Rep. Gerald E. Connolly



Rep. Robert C. "Bobby" Scott



Rep. James E. Clyburn