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July 3, 2014

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write to express my opposition to your administration's desire to permit the use of seismic air guns to search for oil and gas in the Atlantic Ocean, especially off the coast of Delaware. Not only is this proposed action the first major step towards opening the Atlantic Ocean to offshore drilling, which I oppose, but the technology used for this exploration is harmful to marine mammals and fisheries in the region. I urge you to reject this proposal, and refrain from permitting seismic air gun testing off the coast of Delaware.

Seismic air gun testing off the Atlantic coast will lead the way for risky deepwater drilling, the same practice that brought us the *Deepwater Horizon* disaster in the Gulf of Mexico more than four years ago, which continues to plague that region. Additionally, the type of seismic air gun testing used to search for oil and gas is harmful and could injure or kill thousands of marine mammals and fish, including endangered species. Seismic air guns fire dynamite-like blasts of compressed air every 10 -12 seconds, 24 hours a day, for weeks and months at a time. These loud air gun blasts can be heard for many hundreds of miles in the ocean and, as a result, can drive whales to abandon their habitats, go silent, and cease foraging over vast areas. At shorter distances, it can cause permanent hearing loss, injury, and even death for whales, dolphins, and fish.

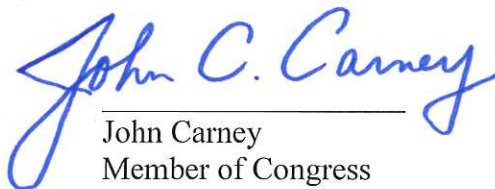
According to the Department of the Interior's (DOI) own estimates, the use of air guns would injure about 138,000 marine mammals and disrupt marine mammal feeding, calving, breeding, and other vital activities more than 13.5 million times. These impacts would include unacceptable levels of injuries and disturbances to critically endangered species, like the North Atlantic right whale, of which there are only about 455 individuals left. Furthermore, these may be underestimates because the DOI has not incorporated into its environmental impact statement new acoustic science being developed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Delaware has an ocean coastline that could be negatively impacted by seismic air gun testing and the offshore drilling that could follow. For example, the gross domestic product (GDP) from Delaware's living resources, which includes fishing, hatcheries, aquaculture, seafood processing,

and seafood markets, is valued at over \$16 million and the economic impact from ocean-based tourism and recreation in the state totals nearly \$600 million. Additionally, there are a total of over 19,000 jobs in the fishing, tourism, and recreation sectors in Delaware that are directly dependent on the resources threatened by seismic air guns, and countless others that are indirectly dependent on those resources. Furthermore, Delaware generates millions of dollars in commercial fishing each year from blue crab, oysters, finfishes, eel, and whelk, which all depend on a healthy ocean for their survival. Simply put, the cost of the proposed action to Delawareans and the marine life off our coasts is far too great to risk for oil and gas exploration.

I would rather see an offshore wind project to generate electricity instead of focusing on oil and gas drilling. I urge your administration to stop this process and focus on ensuring the vitality of coastal economies along the Atlantic coast that need it now more than ever. We cannot put our ocean environment, beaches, marine resources, and coastal economies at risk. Again, I urge you to reconsider this proposal and, at the very least, refrain from permitting seismic air gun testing off the coast of Delaware.

Sincerely,



John Carney  
Member of Congress

CC: Sally Jewell, Secretary of the Interior

CC: Walter Cruickshank, Ph.D., Acting Director of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

CC: Jack Markell, Governor of Delaware