

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

August 2, 2016

Dear Secretary Jewell:

On behalf of our constituents, we are writing to request that the U.S. Department of the Interior deny permit applications for geological and geophysical (G&G) exploration for oil and gas resources along the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf (OCS).

Thank you for removing the scheduled lease sale in the Mid- and South Atlantic from the 2017-2022 OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program. Now it is even more imperative that you reject permits for oil and gas exploration in our region. Allowing offshore exploration, and in particular seismic airgun blasting, to move forward would be unnecessarily dangerous and place a great deal of risk on Maryland's coastal region and state economy.

According to a letter sent by 8 Members of Maryland's Congressional delegation, including Senators Cardin and Mikulski, and Representatives Cummings, Ruppersburger, Van Hollen, Sarbanes, Edwards, and Delaney, there are a total of about 83,000 jobs in the fishing, tourism and recreation sectors in Maryland that are directly dependent on the resources threatened by offshore oil and gas exploration and development, and countless others indirectly dependent on those resources. Coastal Marylanders recognize this-- from crabbers in the Chesapeake Bay, to recreational fishermen, to the hard-working Marylanders who are part of our \$16 billion tourism industry.

In fact, the cities of Ocean City, Berlin, and Baltimore have all passed resolutions opposing the use of seismic airguns off the coast of Maryland. The Ocean City Chamber of Commerce and the Ocean City Hotel-Motel-Restaurant Association are also strongly opposed to offshore oil and gas development, including seismic airgun blasting, as indicated in letters they sent to Governor Hogan as recently as 2016. Moreover, our neighbors to the north in Sussex County, Delaware (Fenwick Island, South Bethany, Bethany Beach, Dewey Beach, Rehoboth Beach, Lewes, and Milton), and to the south in both Accomack and Northampton Counties along Virginia's Eastern Shore have also formally opposed such activities.

These positions of opposition are backed by a significant body of peer-reviewed science indicating that seismic airgun blasting can have negative impacts on marine life, from whales to bivalves, which is a cause for concern regarding our oyster industry. Allowing seismic airgun surveys for oil and gas deposits could disrupt the spawning, feeding and migration patterns that support our fisheries and replenish fish populations from year to year.

Especially when we consider that there will be no offshore oil and gas lease sales in the Atlantic, we cannot support endangering our valuable marine assets and iconic coastal communities with

seismic airgun blasting. We respectfully urge you to protect our coast and deny the pending permit applications for oil and gas exploration in the Atlantic, especially off the coast of Maryland.

Sincerely,

Jamie Raskin
Senator, District 20

Alfred Carr
Delegate, District 18

Brooke Lierman
Delegate, District 46

Kathleen Dumais
Delegate, District 15

Tom Hucker
Councilmember, Montgomery County,
District 5

Diana Fennell
Delegate, District 47A

Cheryl Kagan
Senator, District 17

David Fraser-Hidalgo
Delegate, District 15

Susan Lee
Senator, District 16

Ana Sol Gutierrez
Delegate, District 18

Richard Madaleno
Senator, District 18

Shelly Hettleman
Delegate, District 11

Paul Pinsky
Senator, District 22

Benjamin Kramer
Delegate, District 19

Victor Ramirez
Senator, District 47

Clarence Lam
Delegate, District 12

Jim Rosapepe
Senator, District 21

Eric Luedtke
Delegate, District 14

Ronald Young
Senator, District 3

Maggie McIntosh
Delegate, District 43

Vanessa Atterbeary
Delegate, District 13

Aruna Miller
Delegate, District 15

Kumar Barve
Chair, Environment and Transportation
Committee
District 17

David Moon
Delegate, District 20

Dan Morhaim
Delegate, District 11

Mary Beth Carozza
Delegate, District 38C

Charles Otto
Delegate, District 38A

Joseline Peña-Melnyk
Delegate, District 21

Andrew Platt
Delegate, District 17

Kirill Reznik
Delegate, District 39

Will Smith
Delegate, District 20

Charles Sydnor
Delegate, District 44B

Jimmy Tarlau
Delegate, District 47A

Kriselda Valderrama
Delegate, District 26

Jeff Waldstreicher
Delegate, District 18

Karen Lewis Young
Delegate, District 3A

James Kraft
Baltimore City Council Member, District 1

Sharon Middleton
Baltimore City Council Member, District 6

Mary Pat Clarke
Baltimore City Council Member, District 14

Dannielle Glaros
Prince George's County Council Vice Chair,
District 3

Andrew Pruski
Anne Arundel County Council Member,
District 4

Chris Trambauer
Anne Arundel County Council, District 6

CC: Penny Pritzker, Secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce
Dr. Kathryn Sullivan, Administrator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Abigail Ross Hopper, Director, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
Larry Hogan, Governor, Maryland
U.S. Senator Barbara Mikulski
U.S. Senator Benjamin Cardin