



North Carolina Council of Churches

27 Horne Street
Raleigh, North Carolina 27607
telephone: (919) 828-6501
(919) 828-6542
fax: (919) 828-9697
E-mail: info@ncchurches.org
www.ncchurches.org

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President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We, the North Carolina Council of Churches, comprised of 26 distinct judicatories from 18 denominations with 1.5 million congregants across the state, are writing to call on you to permanently protect the Atlantic from offshore oil and gas drilling, and to deny all Atlantic seismic airgun blasting permits.

The North Carolina Council of Churches recognizes that offshore oil and gas activities jeopardizes an entire way of life for communities with vast economic, social, cultural, familial, and spiritual consequences. Offshore drilling poses a dire and immediate threat to the coastlands and inland estuaries, marshes, and waterways of the coast of North Carolina, and to the ecosystems of birds, shrimp, oysters, fish, and other life-forms. It also threatens the livelihoods of tens of thousands of North Carolinians who rely on a healthy coast in order to make a living. Fishing, tourism and recreation industries risk revenue losses in the billions due to spills and habitat destruction. There have been more than 40 major oil spills from offshore drilling since 1964, each one spewing at least 42,000 gallons of toxic waste into our oceans.

For these reasons and more, we applaud your Administration's decision to remove the Atlantic from the 2017-2022 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Proposed Program.

We now implore you to protect coastal North Carolina by permanently banning offshore drilling and denying seismic exploration off our coast. Such offshore activities are a direct threat to our bountiful marine environment and the very fabric of our coastal communities. With the incoming administration intent on expanding dirty and dangerous drilling activities, it is more important than ever that you finish the job, and enact permanent protection for the Atlantic Coast.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Dr. Jennifer Copeland
Executive Director, NC Council of Churches