



City of Charleston

Joseph P. Riley, Jr.
Mayor

April 16, 2014

The President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President and Secretary Jewell:

I am writing to urge you to halt proposed seismic airgun testing for oil and gas in the Atlantic Ocean. Proposed seismic testing would span from Delaware to Florida, but the impacts would be felt in communities throughout the entire East Coast – potentially harming sea life, ecosystems, fisheries and coastal economies.

The use of airguns to conduct these seismic tests threatens fish populations and profitable fisheries. In fact, airgun noise has been shown to decrease catch rates of certain fisheries. Commercial and recreational fishing off the mid and south Atlantic generate billions annually and supports hundreds of thousands of jobs. The Department of the Interior's assessment ignores the economic impacts the proposed seismic testing will have on fisheries and the fishermen who rely on the oceans for their livelihoods.

Additionally, the type of seismic airgun testing used to search for oil and gas is incredibly harmful and could injure or possibly kill thousands of marine mammals and fish, including the critically endangered North Atlantic right whale. Seismic airguns fire intense blasts of compressed air – almost as loud as explosives – every 10-12 seconds, 24 hours a day, for days to weeks on end. These loud airgun blasts can be heard for many hundreds of miles in the ocean and can drive whales to abandon their habitats, go silent, and cease foraging over vast areas. At shorter distances, airguns cause permanent hearing loss, injury, and even death for whales, dolphins and fish.

Proposed seismic airgun testing will result in serious negative impacts to our marine resources that form the foundation of economic vitality for communities all along the Atlantic coast. We urge your administration to stop this process and focus on ensuring the vitality of vulnerable coastal economies along the Atlantic Coast. We cannot continue to put our ocean environment, beaches, and marine resources and coastal communities at risk.

Most sincerely yours,

Joseph P. Riley, Jr.
Mayor, City of Charleston

JPR,jr/mp



P.O. Box 652, Charleston, South Carolina 29402
843-577-6970 Fax 843-720-3827