



North Carolina General Assembly  
House Of Representatives

Representative Pricey Harrison  
57th District, Guilford County

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Joint Legislative Elections Oversight Committee

March 30, 2015

Director Abigail Ross Hopper, Esq.  
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Director Hopper:

We write to express our strong opposition to the inclusion of the Mid and South Atlantic planning areas in the recently-released Draft 2017-2022 Five-Year Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Leasing Program. We urge you to protect the natural resources of the region by removing the Atlantic coast from the 2017-2022 Five Year Oil and Gas Leasing Program and, instead, commit more fully to the development of clean renewable energy.

Almost five years have passed since the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig exploded in the Gulf of Mexico, killing eleven people and gushing more than 200 million gallons of oil into the ocean for 87 straight days, yet very little has been done to make offshore drilling safer since then. Instead of passing laws or implementing regulations ensuring that another oil spill disaster does not happen, the administration has decided to double-down on this dangerous and risky practice by expanding drilling to the Mid and South Atlantic. As representatives of the states in those planning areas, and others that would see the effects of oil exploration and development, we are writing to tell you that we oppose expanding offshore drilling to the East Coast.

Our coastal communities, including the culturally-rich fishing and tourist attractions of Cape Cod, the Jersey Shore, Virginia Beach, the Outer Banks, Myrtle Beach, Charleston and Savannah to name just a few, would be both economically and environmentally devastated by any oil spill occurring off the East Coast of the United States. From Maine to Florida, the Atlantic coast supports fishing, tourism, and recreation in the form of nearly 1.4 million jobs and over \$95 billion in GDP.

Rather than continuing down the road of polluting and finite energy sources like oil and gas, we should be more fully committing to the development of clean energy. Clean energy is also a true job creator. Additionally, while oil and gas resources are finite, many alternatives are limitless and will never run out. When oil and gas runs out, so do the jobs. Renewables, on the other hand, can keep generating power and jobs well into the future.

Instead of putting our states' natural resources at risk by opening our treasured coastlines to the risky business of oil and gas drilling, we should be cultivating clean, job-creating energy. We, therefore, urge you to remove the Atlantic coast from the 2017-2022 Five Year Oil and Gas Leasing Program. We further urge you to commit more fully to developing clean alternative energy so we can all have cleaner air, cleaner water, and a healthier environment in which to live.

Respectfully,



Representative Pricey Harrison

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