

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

Interior Secretary Sally Jewell
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

May 6, 2014

Dear President Obama and Secretary Jewell:

We the undersigned write to urge you to halt proposed seismic airgun testing for oil and gas in the Atlantic Ocean.

Seismic airgun testing is the first step towards deep-water drilling, which would inevitably bring the Atlantic coast one step closer to the same practice that brought us the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill disaster. While proposed seismic airgun testing would span from Delaware to Florida, an oil spill the size of that which flowed from the *Deepwater Horizon* oil rig would harm sea life, ecosystems, fisheries and coastal economies along the entire East Coast. Furthermore, expanding offshore drilling to the Atlantic will only deepen our dependence on oil and gas, and worsen the impacts of climate change and ocean acidification.

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. 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 at a time. 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 can cause permanent hearing loss, injury, and even death for whales, dolphins and fish.

According to the Department of the Interior's own estimates, the use of airguns would injure more than 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 less than 500 whales left.

We cannot put our oceans, beaches, marine resources, and coastal economies at risk. We urge your administration to stop this proposed testing and to focus instead on transitioning to a clean, renewable energy future. Please act to stop this activity from going forward.

Sincerely,

Claire Douglass, Campaign Director
Oceana

Leah Donahey, Arctic Ocean & Reserve Program Director
Alaska Wilderness League

Diane Glim, President
American Cetacean Society

Sarah Winter, Director Regional Marine Conservation Project
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Athan Manuel, Director, Lands Protection Program
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