August 17, 2017

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary, United States Department of Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke:

I’m writing today to provide comments to the 2019-2024 National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program.

Grand Strand’s beaches serve as the lifeblood of the local community and an economic engine to the entire state. It’s no secret that tourism is the leading industry in South Carolina. Every year, some 17 million visitors flock to Myrtle Beach on vacation, generating hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue that goes to fund infrastructure, education, and health care around the state. During my time in Congress, I have fought hard to ensure the continued success of our beaches. After Hurricane Matthew tore down the coast, leveling dunes and washing sand offshore, I worked in Congress to secure funding to restore the beaches.

While drilling off the coast of South Carolina may have economic benefits, it comes with potential risks. With the success of fracking, the cost of a barrel of oil has plummeted. Offshore drilling no longer enjoys the economic prospects it once held. However, the risks still exist. As such, I oppose opening up the coast of South Carolina for oil and gas production.

Sincerely,

Tom Rice
Member of Congress