



President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

March 6, 2020

Dear President Trump,

We write in opposition to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's 2019-2024 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program. In Maryland alone, 96,000 jobs and \$6B in GDP depend on a healthy Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean.

No fewer than 280 municipalities in East Coast states have formally opposed oil and gas development in the Atlantic, including our neighbors in Ocean City and Worcester County Maryland. Together, the 280 municipalities opposing offshore drilling represent 90% of the East Coast. Additionally, over 42,000 business interests and over 2,000 federal, state, and local legislators have opposed oil and gas exploration or development in the Atlantic.

It is clear that Atlantic coastal communities, elected leaders, and other stakeholders do not want offshore oil and gas development, including offshore drilling and seismic airgun blasting. The Chamber cannot risk our ocean and coastal resources, which bolster our strong regional economy.

We are strongly opposed to any five-year offshore drilling program that threatens Maryland's irreplaceable natural resources with the impacts of seismic airgun blasting and those from continuous drilling. A healthy Atlantic Ocean supports some of the most pristine beaches in the world and the commercial and recreational impact of the Chesapeake Bay. Because offshore drilling can be dangerous and unpredictable, the threat of an oil spill harming marine life and impacting our tourism industry is too great. Further, Assateague Island National Seashore, which includes more than 37 miles of high quality Ocean beaches, is one of the few remaining undeveloped barrier island environments along the mid-Atlantic coast. Assateague Island State Park has been named in the Top 10 in the nation and the seashore is an important regional destination with more than 2 million visitors each year, resulting in an economic benefit of \$84 million annually. Here in Ocean City, we boast 10 miles of shoreline that hosts upwards of 8 million guests annually, with tourism spending topping 1 billion. [RJ1]

We would be grateful if the entire Atlantic was removed from the proposed five-year program. Our ocean is priceless, and our coastal assets are far too valuable to risk for oil and gas development. We urge you to use your presidential authority to permanently protect the Atlantic Ocean and our communities from offshore drilling and seismic airgun blasting.

Sincerely,

Larnet St. Amant

Larnet St. Amant
Executive Director
Berlin Maryland Chamber of Commerce

CC: Rep. Andy Harris
Senator Ben Cardin
Senator Chris Van Hollen
Governor Larry Hogan