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March 1, 2019

Mr. Walter Cruickshank, Acting Director
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

RE: Opposition to Seismic Testing in the Atlantic Ocean

Dear Mr. Cruickshank,

Enclosed please find a position statement from the Bethany-Fenwick Area Chamber of Commerce on seismic testing in the Atlantic Ocean.

The Bethany-Fenwick Area Chamber of Commerce is located in southeastern Sussex County, Delaware and represents 10 of the 25 towns of the county. The area is surrounded by the Delaware Inland Bays and the Atlantic Ocean. The residents and business community have everything at risk by seismic testing for the search of offshore oil in the Atlantic Ocean.

Our organization, made up of 700 business members, implores you and the decision makers at BOEM to withhold the release of permits for seismic testing in the Atlantic Ocean.

Sincerely,

Lauren R. Weaver
Executive Director

Cory Walsh
Board President

CC: Senator Chris Coons, Senator Tom Carper, Congresswoman Lisa Blunt Rochester
Delaware Governor John Carney, Oceana, National Marine Fisheries Services,

The Quiet Resorts' quality of life and economic risks:

- a. Tourism is the second largest industry in Delaware.
 - i. Contributes 5% of the state's GDP at 3.4 billion dollars
 - ii. 4th largest state employer (9% of State Employment)
 1. With over 18,000 jobs in Sussex County (17% of county employment)
 - iii. Delaware is host to over 9 million visitors annually
 1. Total visitor spending over 2 billion dollars in Sussex County alone
 2. State & Local taxes contributing 521 million dollars annually
 - iv. The Quiet Resorts includes:
 1. 10 Towns
 2. Seven oceanfront beach communities
 3. Inland Bays Watershed covers an area of over 32 square miles
 - a. Impacts 9 of the 10 towns within the Quiet Resorts
 - b. Three interconnected bays Rehoboth Bay, Indian River Bay, and Little Assawoman Bay
 4. 700 businesses in the chamber membership

The Bethany-Fenwick Area Chamber of Commerce is in opposition to the applications for permits from companies wishing to conduct seismic testing in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Delaware and other coastal areas of the Mid-Atlantic Region. If oil or natural gas exploration creates the potential for an oil spill such as the BP spill in the Gulf of Mexico it poses a real threat to the state and local economies identified above. The risks of exploration and the precursor activity of seismic testing, far outweigh the potential benefits that will be received from these activities and the residents, workers, property owners, businesses, and visitors and should not be subject to the negative impact on habitat, quality of life and local economy.

The Bethany-Fenwick Area Chamber of Commerce adamantly opposes the development of offshore drilling and seismic air gun blasting along the Delaware coast and Mid-Atlantic regions and requests that the U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) deny all permits for seismic testing in the Atlantic Ocean and for the National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS) to rescind the permits issued.