RESOLUTION

FOR THE PURPOSE OF EXPRESSING ST. MARY’S COUNTY’S OPPOSITION TO OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS DRILLING AND EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES

WHEREAS, on August 16, 2017, Governor Hogan formerly notified the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) of Maryland’s opposition to opening up the Mid-Atlantic outer Continental Shelf (OCS) lease area for oil and gas exploration and development activities as part of the 2019-2024, 5-year OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program; and

WHEREAS, offshore oil and gas drilling and exploration places coastal communities at economic and ecological risk from oil spills and the pollution brought by routine drilling operations and onshore industrialization, threatening the livelihoods of commercial and recreational fisherman and small businesses that rely on a clean and healthy ocean and beaches; and,

WHEREAS, offshore drilling may require significant onshore infrastructure, such as pipelines or refineries, which would harm the character of Maryland’s coastline, perpetuates our ties to dirty carbon pollution, and exacerbates wetlands loss and storm surge and sea level rise impacts; and,

WHEREAS, offshore drilling activities pose threats to the Chesapeake Bay, a major historical, cultural, economic and ecological treasure in this region; and

WHEREAS, seismic air-guns fire intense blasts of compressed air, which create one of the loudest manmade sounds in the ocean at 200-230 decibels, occurring as frequently as every ten seconds, for days to weeks at a time; and

WHEREAS, seismic air gun blasting to explore for oil and gas deposits has been proven to disrupt and displace marine life and threatens our coastal wetlands in Maryland, which are of intrinsic ecological value for numerous migratory bird species, serve as essential nursery habitats for recreational and commercially important fisheries, and act as natural buffers from storm surges and hurricanes; and

WHEREAS, St. Mary’s County endeavors to be a good steward of the State's environment and its resources; and

WHEREAS, St. Mary's County recognizes that offshore drilling could impact activities at Naval Air Station Patuxent River and the use of the Atlantic Test Range, which could result in a negative economic impact for St. Mary's County; and

WHEREAS, tourism that is related to the appreciation of our natural coastal and historical environment is a major economic force in St. Mary’s County; and

WHEREAS, St. Mary’s County’s maritime heritage contributes to a high quality of life for our residents to enjoy, enables business recruitment, and attracts new residents; and
WHEREAS, St. Mary’s County recommends that it would be more economically and ecologically responsible to pursue non-polluting sources of renewable energy through solar, wind, and biomass energy production projects that pose less risk to our coastal environment and economic health before using uncertain methods such as seismic blasting for offshore oil and gas exploration.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Commissioners of St. Mary’s County, that the County opposes offshore oil and gas drilling and exploration activities, including seismic air gun blasting, in the mid-Atlantic Ocean adjacent to Maryland's coastline.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Governor, Maryland's 5th Congressional District House and Senate Delegations to the 116th Congress, the President of the Maryland Senate, and the Maryland House Speaker.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Commissioners of St Mary's County, that this Resolution shall be effective upon the date written below.

Those voting Aye: 5
Those voting Nay: 0
Those Abstaining: 0
Date of Adoption: 1/29/19
Effective Date: 3/12/19

ATTEST:

Rebecca B. Bridget
County Administrator

COMMISSIONERS OF ST. MARY’S COUNTY

James R. Guy, Commissioner President

Eric Calvin, Commissioner

Michael L. Hewitt, Commissioner

Todd B. Morgan, Commissioner

John E. O’Connor, Commissioner

Approved as to form and legal sufficiency:

David A. Weiskopf
County Attorney