



City of Charleston

Joseph P. Riley, Jr.
Mayor

July 2, 2012

Mr. Gary D. Goeke
Chief, Regional Assessment Section
Office of Environment (MS 5410)
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region
1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard,
New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394

Re: Comments on the Draft PEIS for Atlantic G&G Activities

Dear Mr. Goeke:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Atlantic G&G activities PEIS. As a coastal constituent adjacent to the South Atlantic Planning Area, I encourage BOEM to adopt Alternative C—the no action alternative—in its programmatic environmental impact statement. Our concerns regarding the potential impacts oil and gas exploration and development could have on South Carolina's natural environment, tourism and fishing industries, and quality of life are outlined below.

South Carolina, including Charleston, enjoys a vibrant coastal tourism industry and thriving fisheries that contribute significantly to both our quality of life and economy. More than 6,000 people are employed in the fishing industry, and commercial and recreational fishing account for more than \$500 million in sales per year. Our state's tourism and recreation industry generates \$2.2 billion in revenue per year and employs over 55,000 South Carolinians.

Not only are our economies largely based on the vitality of our coastal resources, but culturally we identify with our coastal heritage and are proud of our region's natural beauty. Therefore, maintaining a healthy coast is of the utmost importance to the state of South Carolina. It is our goal to preserve the integrity of our beaches, marshes, and waterways for South Carolinians and the many tourists from all over the world who share our enjoyment of these special places.



P.O. Box 652, Charleston, South Carolina 29402

843-577-6970 Fax 843-720-3827

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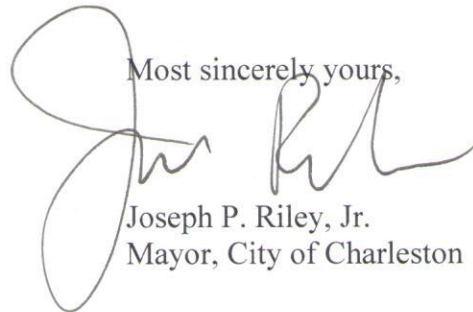
Offshore geological and geophysical (G & G) activities and eventual drilling can be harmful to the marine and coastal environment and thus would be inconsistent with our stated priority of maintaining our coastal resources. Acoustic pollution caused by oil and gas G & G activities such as the use of air guns, aeromagnetic surveys, and the drilling of test wells has proven associations with major impacts to marine mammals, turtles, and fish. Waterborne pollution such as drilling fluid and potential test well blowouts further compromise the health of our waters. The vitality of aquatic ecosystems and the beauty of our region is non-negotiable for our fishers, shrimpers, and crabbers, our tourists, and our coastal residents' way of life.

Furthermore, given that we would not support eventual commercial oil or gas drilling off our coast following the exploration process, surveying activities would be a wasteful investment of time, money, and energy. In the wake of the Gulf oil disaster, as well as the many other lesser-known blowouts that occur every year, we insist that the risk of blowouts alone is enough to outweigh the benefits of drilling. Clean renewable energy sources are becoming less expensive by the day and are a much smarter investment than risky offshore drilling.

Since offshore oil and gas prospecting and potential eventual drilling would be harmful and risky to our coastal economy, natural beauty, and way of life, I urge you to implement Alternative C and not allow G & G activities for oil and gas in the Mid- and South Atlantic Planning Areas.

With kindest regards, I remain

Most sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Riley', written over the typed name and title.

Joseph P. Riley, Jr.
Mayor, City of Charleston

JPR,jr/cw