

The Princess Anne Garden Club

P. O. Box 1319 Virginia Beach, VA 23451

September 8, 2015

The Honorable William D. Sessoms, Jr., Mayor
Members of City Council
2401 Courthouse Drive
City Hall, Building #1
Virginia Beach, VA 23456

Re: 2017-2022 Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) Offshore Oil and Gas Leasing Program for the Mid-Atlantic Coast including the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Dear Mayor Sessoms and Council Members:

The members of The Princess Anne Garden Club have resolved on September 8, 2015 to oppose the 2017-2022 BOEM Offshore Oil and Gas Leasing Program for the Mid-Atlantic Coast, which includes the Commonwealth of Virginia. We request that the Virginia Beach City Council move to oppose this plan as well.

The Princess Anne Garden Club has worked for over 83 years to restore, improve and protect the quality of the environment through educational programs and action. We are known for our decades of work and funding in support of First Landing State Park, the Virginia Marine Science Museum and many other organizations across Virginia Beach.

The experience of Gulf States with oil and gas drilling operations and the Deepwater Horizon disaster lead us to voice our concerns about the BOEM Program. The Virginia Beach Restaurant Association, the Virginia Beach Hotel Association, the Resort Advisory Commission, Lynnhaven River NOW and dozens of coastal communities along the East Coast have all stated opposition to the proposed drilling because of the risk for catastrophic oil spills and certainty of persistent release of toxic chemicals and routine oil spills of normal drilling operations. Construction of the infrastructure required to support drilling operations is also fraught with pollution both on-shore and in the water.

Tourism and our thriving fishing industry remain at the heart of our economy. The protection of our coastal waters and our land is critical to our environment and our quality of life. In Virginia Beach, supporting our clean environment and promoting our economy go hand in hand.

Gas and oil drilling risk jobs in tourism and supporting businesses, commercial fishing, the commercial shellfish industry, the health of wildlife, human health and quality of life. These significant harms are not worth the risk. The lessons are clear in the Gulf States.

We ask that the Virginia Beach City Council issue a Resolution opposing the BOEM plan.

Nancy Dickerson, President

Wendy Vaughn, Conservation Chair

Member, Garden Club of Virginia