

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER, COUNTY OF CAPE MAY, STATE OF NEW JERSEY

RESOLUTION #2018-81

Title: RESOLUTION OPPOSING OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS ACTIVITIES

**WHEREAS**, the Township of Lower promotes preservation of, and concern for, the environment, its citizens, and the unique wildlife that live and migrate through the Township and surrounding area; and

**WHEREAS**, certain activities raise a general concern for their potential impact on the environment and wildlife; and

**WHEREAS**, on January 8, 2018, the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) announced in the Federal Register notice the release of their Draft Proposed Program (DPP) for the 2019-2024 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program. BOEM is requesting public comment on the DPP as well as formal scoping for a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the 2019-2024 Program; and

**WHEREAS**, this new plan includes the entire Atlantic Ocean from Maine to Florida, including the waters off New Jersey within 3 miles of beaches, as well as including other ocean areas totaling some 90% of US ocean waters; and

**WHEREAS**, New Jersey boasts over 127 miles of beautiful ocean coastline and hundreds of miles of back-bays, estuaries, and other waterways connected to the Atlantic Ocean; and

**WHEREAS**, the Jersey Shore is essential to the health of our communities, environment, and the thriving economy of New Jersey; and

**WHEREAS**, the physical, hydrodynamic, and biological characteristics of the ocean off the Jersey Shore are unique in the world, as more than 300 species of fish, nearly 350 species of birds, 5 species of sea turtles, and many marine mammals such as 20 species of whales and dolphins, 1 species of porpoise, and 4 species of seals, frequent this region. Nine endangered species, four of which are whales, can be found in these ocean waters, including the Atlantic Right Whale, one of the world's most endangered marine mammals. The region also serves as an essential migratory pathway for many of these species; and

**WHEREAS**, the Jersey Shore sustains the economy of the region with its bounty of natural resources for millions of people through tourism. Tourism brings more than \$44 billion to New Jersey's economy each year and provides jobs to more than 500,000 people; and

**WHEREAS**, recreational and commercial fisheries in New Jersey provide enormous economic benefits, including revenue, food production, and recreational activities. In 2014, recreational fishing supported nearly 20,000 jobs and resulted in \$2 billion of retail sales. Commercial fishing supports nearly 7,300 jobs and provides \$152 million in landings, not including restaurant and retail sales; and

**WHEREAS**, current estimates of the amount of technically recoverable oil off the entire Atlantic coast from Maine to Florida would only last the nation approximately 229 days, and the amount of technically recoverable gas would only last approximately 562 days; and

**WHEREAS**, offshore oil and gas development, causes substantial environmental impacts, including: (a) onshore damage due to infrastructure, (b) water pollution from drilling muds and the water brought-up from a well with oil and gas (called "produced waters"), (c) noise from seismic surveys, (d) air pollution, and (e) oil spills; and

**WHEREAS**, the harmful environmental consequences of offshore oil and gas exploration and development are serious and pose a threat to the environmental and economic assets of New Jersey; and

**WHEREAS**, the BP Horizon disaster in the Gulf of Mexico (2010) is evidence of the dangers associated with offshore drilling. The disaster cost the lives of 11 people, devastated coastal economies and countless livelihoods, and killed countless marine animals, and continues to cause harm to marine life as documented by further studies; and

**WHEREAS**, Federal Administration officials are also weakening protections of ocean resources by weakening rules and regulations and reducing funding sources for spill response; and

**WHEREAS**, oil spills travel vast distances, and the Gulf Stream and Labrador Ocean Current all flow toward New Jersey making the region vulnerable to impacts from spills anywhere in the Atlantic Ocean; and

**WHEREAS**, within 5 days of the release of the OPP Governor Scott from Florida was able to convince Department of Interior Secretary Zinke to remove Florida from further consideration for drilling due to the importance of coastal tourism to that state, and New Jersey shares this same economic dependence on tourism and clean ocean economies; and

**WHEREAS**, bi-partisan opposition against drilling off the New Jersey coast has included every Governor since 1985, and a majority of the congressional delegation and most coastal towns; and

**WHEREAS**, energy conservation and efficiency measures can significantly reduce the nation's need to explore and drill for nonrenewable resources, such as oil and natural gas; and

**WHEREAS**, the BOEM is requesting public comment on the DPP as well as formal scoping for a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the 2019-2024 Program; and

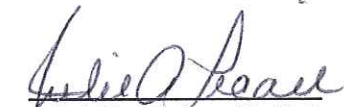
**WHEREAS**, coastal municipalities have a profound interest in maintaining strong federal protections for our nation's coastal environment, as well as the economic and social benefits it supports.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Township Council of the Township of Lower, County of Cape May, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. The Township incorporates the averments of the preamble to this resolution.
2. The Township opposes offshore oil and gas exploration and drilling activities that would affect the coast of New Jersey, and calls upon Secretary of the Interior Ryan K. Zinke who oversees the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to withdraw New Jersey and the entire Atlantic Ocean from consideration for the offshore oil and gas exploration, development, or drilling.
3. This resolution shall take effect immediately, according to law.

	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
CONRAD	X		X			
PERRY			X			
ROY			X			
SIPPEL		X	X			
SIMONSEN			X			

I, Julie A. Picard, Township Clerk of the Township of Lower, County of Cape May, State of New Jersey, do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and exact copy of a resolution duly authorized by the Township Council at a meeting held on February 21, 2018.

  
Julie A. Picard, Township Clerk