



NC RESORT TOWNS & CONVENTION CITIES

March 9, 2018

Ms. Kelly Hammerle
National OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program Manager
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (VAM-LD)
45600 Woodland Road
Sterling, VA 20166-9216

RE: RTCC Comments—Draft Proposed Program for the 2019-2024 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program

Dear Ms. Hammerle:

The NC Association of Resort Towns and Convention Cities (RTCC) is a coalition of North Carolina cities and towns that are sustained or specifically affected by travel and tourism. Dozens of municipalities banded together to create RTCC, in part, to enhance their local economies by seeking legislative and administrative support for the state's travel and tourism industries. I write today to express the staunch opposition of RTCC members to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's Draft Proposed Program for the 2019-2024 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program.

As leaders in local N.C. communities, we recognize the critical role tourism plays in our state's overall economic health. If our waters are opened to seismic testing and offshore drilling, as proposed in this Program, that action will imperil our \$3.5 billion coastal tourism economy, \$1.06 billion commercial and recreational fishing industry, and our coastal communities' quality of life. It will also reduce state and local tax revenues shared with all N.C. communities statewide, an amount that totaled over \$340 million in 2016. This income generated by our state's coastal tourism and fishing industries far exceeds the 20-year projections for oil and gas production, according to a 2014 study by Timothy J. Considine. Therefore, we see no rational basis for proceeding with the proposed testing and drilling program.

Every day, our local leaders see firsthand the benefits that flow to the workers and residents in our communities and the rest of the state from these activities. Many of our families and business owners are fearful that the actions proposed in the Program will take away their livelihoods. We stand together with them in opposing this Program and in asking that you exclude North Carolina from the Program.



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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this vital matter.

Sincerely,

Alan Holden

Alan Holden, Mayor

Town of Holden Beach

Chair, NC Association of Resort Towns & Convention Cities