Dear Secretary Jewell:

As you know, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) initiated the permitting process for geological and geophysical (G&G) exploration along the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) in 2012, prior to the announcement of the 2017-2022 OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Draft Proposed Program. In March 2016, after a long period of public comment and internal review, BOEM removed the lease sale in the Mid- and South Atlantic from consideration. We are writing to request that you continue to protect our coast and deny permit applications for G&G exploration in the Atlantic Ocean, particularly off the coast of Delaware which was never considered in the drilling program.

A significant body of peer-reviewed science indicates that seismic airgun blasts used during oil and gas exploration can cause catch rates of some commercial fish to decline, harm whales, including the critically endangered North Atlantic right whale, and displace various fish species and other marine wildlife. Coastal Delaware is heavily dependent on fishing and coastal tourism; these industries support not only Sussex County, but the entire state. More than 7 million tourists visit Delaware each year, many of them drawn to our scenic beaches. Tourism is the fourth largest private employer in the state, employing 60,000 people and generating nearly $7 billion annually. Saltwater sport fishing, another valuable and renowned Delaware industry, resulted in $35 million in wages and supported 1,100 jobs in 2013. Seismic airgun blasting to search for oil and gas deposits would unnecessarily put our coastal economies and the communities that depend on them at risk.

Our position is supported and informed by seven Delaware coastal towns, including Lewes, Rehoboth Beach, Dewey Beach, Bethany Beach, South Bethany, Fenwick Island, and Milton, which have passed resolutions opposing seismic blasting and offshore drilling; the Rehoboth Beach Homeowners Association; the Marine Education, Research & Rehabilitation Institute based in Lewes, DE; Delaware Mobile-Surf Fishermen; the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control; and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council; as well as numerous stakeholders and experts. Just last year, 75 leading marine scientists wrote a letter to President Obama stating that “opening the U.S. East Coast to seismic airgun exploration poses an unacceptable risk of serious harm to marine life…the full extent of which will not be understood until long after the harm occurs.”

Due to the previously mentioned concern and opposition from the scientific community, fishery management experts, Delaware’s coastal communities, and stakeholders in the fishing and tourism industries, and because we do not support offshore drilling off the coast of Delaware, we respectfully request that you protect our coastal assets and deny the pending permit applications for G&G exploration in the Atlantic.

Sincerely,
Diane Hanson  
**Mayor, Dewey Beach, Delaware**

Ted Becker  
**Mayor, Lewes, Delaware**

Karen Peterson  
**Senator, District 9**

Ernesto Lopez  
**Senator, District 6**

Bruce Ennis  
**Senator, District 14**

Bethany Hall-Long  
**Senator, District 10**

David Sokola  
**Senator, District 8**

Bryan Townsend  
**Senator, District 11**

Paul Baumbach  
**Representative, District 23**

Ronald Gray  
**Representative, District 38**

Deborah Hudson  
**Representative, District 12**

John Kowalko  
**Representative, District 25**

Edward Osienski  
**Representative, District 24**

William Outten  
**Representative, District 30**

Charles Paradee  
**Representative, District 29**

Peter Schwartzkopf  
**Representative, District 14**

Stephen Smyk  
**Representative, District 20**

Kimberly Williams  
**Representative, District 19**

Hanifa Shabazz  
**Council Member, Wilmington City Council, District 4**

Maria Cabrera  
**Council Member, Wilmington City Council, At-Large**

Dennis Reardon  
**Councilperson, Lewes Town Council**

Rob Morgan  
**Councilperson, Lewes Town Council**

Mike Dunmeyer  
**Commissioner, Dewey Beach Town Council**

Dale Cooke  
**Commissioner, Dewey Beach Town Council**

Stan Mills  
**Rehoboth Beach Board of Commissioners**

Kathy McGuinness  
**Rehoboth Beach Board of Commissioners**

Patrick Gossett  
**Rehoboth Beach Board of Commissioners**

Lorraine Zellers  
**Rehoboth Beach Board of Commissioners**

Toni Sharp  
**Rehoboth Beach Board of Commissioners**

Paul Kuhns  
**Rehoboth Beach Board of Commissioners**

Jack Gordon  
**Mayor, Bethany Beach**

Rosemary Hardiman  
**Councilmember, Bethany Beach Town Council**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pat Voveris</td>
<td>Mayor, South Bethany Town Council</td>
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<td>Sue Callaway</td>
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<td>Roy Williams</td>
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<td>Gene Langan</td>
<td>Mayor, Fenwick Island</td>
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<td>Frank Weisgerber</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sam Garde</td>
<td>Councilman, Milton</td>
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CC: Penny Pritzker, Secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce  
Dr. Kathryn Sullivan, Administrator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
Abigail Ross Hopper, Director, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management  
Jack Markell, Governor, Delaware  
U.S. Senator Tom Carper  
U.S. Senator Chris Coons  
U.S. Representative John Carney