

Governor of Virginia Terry McAuliffe
P.O. Box 1475
Richmond, VA 23218

Governor of Maryland Larry Hogan
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Governor of Delaware Jack Markell
150 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., 2nd Floor
Dover, DE 19901

CC:

President Barack Obama
Secretary Sally Jewell, U.S. Dept. of the Interior
Director Abigail Ross Hopper, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
Secretary Kathryn Sullivan, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association
Assistant Administrator Eileen Sobeck, National Marine Fisheries Service

March 29, 2016

Dear Governors McAuliffe, Hogan, and Markell:

On behalf of watermen and other fishing and seafood stakeholders across Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware, we are writing to express our serious concerns with proposed offshore oil and gas exploration and development along the Atlantic coast. We request that you protect our way of life and ensure our industries' futures by opposing these proposals.

As you know, our historic industries, drawing from both the Atlantic coast and the Chesapeake Bay, contribute hundreds of millions of dollars to our region's economy each year and support thousands of jobs; from charter boat captains and tackle shops, to commercial fishermen, processors, retailers and restaurateurs.

Recreational anglers spent \$3.7 billion across the mid-Atlantic in 2011, and commercial fishing brought in \$263.5 million in revenue across our three states in 2014. Our industries not only support the mid-Atlantic through these economic benefits, but as institutions that help define our region's proud culture and history.

Please also consider the following:

- In 2014 in Virginia, shellfish growers sold \$55.9 million in oysters and clams, showing an increase of 14% total revenue for clam growers and 33% for oyster growers.
- In 2013, the dockside value of commercial landings of Maryland's iconic blue crab was nearly \$50 million.
- In 2013, saltwater sportfishing in Delaware resulted in \$35 million in wages and supported 1,100 jobs.

If offshore oil exploration is permitted in the waters off the Eastern seaboard, it will have significant impacts on our fisheries. Seismic exploration has been shown to negatively impact sea life, from whales and dolphins to bivalves, which is a cause for concern regarding our oyster industry. Allowing seismic blasting could disrupt the spawning, feeding and migration patterns that support our fisheries and replenish fish populations from year to year. In addition to these immediate threats from exploration, leaks and spills across U.S. waters have demonstrated the problems offshore oil & gas development can cause once drilling is underway.

Watermen in the Delmarva region have worked for decades to restore our waterways and recover oyster, crab and finfish fisheries – we cannot let that hard work and sacrifice be lost to risky oil & gas development. Please protect our ocean ecosystems and your constituents who depend on them by opposing seismic exploration and offshore drilling in the Atlantic.

We thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Kayla Bancroft
Christiansburg, Virginia

Connor Fisher
Long Neck, Delaware

Carolyn Baranowski
Millsboro, Delaware

Lee T. Fulmer
Delaware Surf Fishing
Bechtelsville, Pennsylvania

Jack Barnes
Ocean Pines, Maryland

Ed Hill
Houseboat Media
Dagsboro, Delaware

Vince Barr
Saldfish.net
Ocean View, Delaware

Michael Ho
Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament
Virginia Beach, Virginia

Don Baugh
Environmental Leadership Strategies
Annapolis, Maryland

Walter Hogue
Richmond, Virginia

Michelle E. Deller
Delaware Surf Fishing
Lewes, Delaware

Robert R. Hruby
Rehoboth Beach, Delaware

Gordon Diddlemeyer
Recreational Fisherman Matter
Ocean View, Delaware

Louise Johnson
Shady Side, Maryland

Anthony Kimmick
Toms River, New Jersey

Brian Knode
Facilities Design and Construction
Salisbury, Maryland

George Kotarides
Virginia Beach Saltwater Fishing Tournament
Virginia Beach, Virginia

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Maryland Saltwater Sport Fisherman's Assn.
Berlin, Maryland

John McFalls
Maryland Saltwater Sport Fisherman's Assn.
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Michael Messick
Camden, Delaware

Richard Nieman
Maryland Saltwater Fishing Assn.
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Timothy P. O'Brien
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Charlottesville, Virginia

Michael O'Brien
Tycoon Tackle, Inc.
Isle of Palms, South Carolina

Phil Roher
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Newport News, Virginia

Terry Simpson
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Ronald Smith
Silver Spring, Maryland

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Susan Sullivan
Roslyn, Pennsylvania

Brian Sullivan
BSD Fishing
Abington, Pennsylvania

Marc Turner
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Rob Wolhar
Delaware Jet Ski Fishing Club
Milford, Delaware

Gail Zatcoff
Blacksburg, Virginia