Resolution No.: 18-406
Introduced: March 1, 2016
Adopted: March 1, 2016

COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

Lead Sponsor: Councilmember Hucker
Co-Sponsors: Councilmembers Rice, Elrich, Berliner, Leventhal and Riemer

SUBJECT: Opposition to Oil and Gas Development in the Atlantic Ocean

Background

1. The U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) is considering opening the Mid-
and South Atlantic Ocean to exploration and development of offshore oil and gas including
risky methods, such as seismic blasting to search for potential deposits below the ocean
floor. Seismic air-guns fire frequent, intense blasts of compressed air, which create one of
the loudest manmade sounds in the ocean at 250 decibels. These intense sounds may injure
or kill marine and aquatic life. The full impact of seismic blasting and offshore drilling in
the Atlantic Ocean is not yet fully understood by scientists, the oil and gas industry, BOEM,
or the Federal Government.

2. Exploratory and commercial drilling, extraction, and transportation of offshore oil and gas
resources pose a significant risk of an oil spill and leakage of other toxic waste. Offshore
drilling may require significant onshore infrastructure, such as pipelines or refineries, which
may harm the character of our Delmarva coast.

3. Offshore drilling activities would threaten coastland wetlands in Maryland that have
valuable economic value for many industries, serve as essential nursery habitats for
recreational and commercially important fisheries, and act as natural buffers from storm
surge and hurricanes.

4. Offshore exploration and drilling activities would threaten the Chesapeake Bay, a major
historical, cultural, economic, and ecological treasure in the region.

5. The exploration and development of oil and gas off the Mid - and South Atlantic coast
would not effectively supply the long-term energy needs of our country.

6. Montgomery County has long been a good steward of the State’s environment and its
natural resources. A healthy and vibrant coastal environment supports tourism and fishing
for the benefit of current and future residents, businesses, property owners, and visitors to
the County and State.
**Action**

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following resolution:

1. The County Council opposes offshore oil and gas development in the Mid- and South Atlantic Ocean adjacent to the Delmarva Coast, in general, and especially the use of seismic blasting technology for this development.

2. The County Council supports expanded investments in clean, renewable energy. The County and State have already increased renewable energy capacity by more than 50% and hope to become a national hub for green businesses and jobs.

3. The County Council calls on the State of Maryland, the Congress of the United States and the President of the United States to oppose offshore oil and gas development in the Mid- and South Atlantic Ocean. The Council will work with the Governor, the Maryland House and Senate Delegations to the 113th Congress, and the Montgomery County Delegation to the Maryland General Assembly to accomplish this.

This is a correct copy of Council action.

Linda M. Lauer, Clerk of the Council