



CHRIS DZADOVSKY
Chairman

**ST. LUCIE COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS**

CHRIS DZADOVSKY
CHAIRMAN
DISTRICT 1

TOD MOWERY
VICE-CHAIRMAN
DISTRICT 2

LINDA BARTZ
DISTRICT 3

FRANNIE HUTCHINSON
DISTRICT 4

CATHY TOWNSEND
DISTRICT 5

HOWARD N. TIPTON
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

DAN MCINTYRE
COUNTY ATTORNEY

MAILING ADDRESS
2300 VIRGINIA AVENUE
FORT PIERCE, FL 34982

PHONE
(772) 462-1410

TDD
(772) 462-1428

FAX
(772) 462-2131

E-MAIL

DELGADILLOR@STLUCIECO.
ORG

WEBSITE
WWW.STLUCIECO.GOV

August 11, 2017

Ms. Kelly Hammerle
National Program Manager, BOEM
45600 Woodland Road
Mailstop VAM-LD
Sterling, VA 20166

Re: Request for Information and Comments on the Preparation of the 2019-2024
National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program MAA 104000

Dear Ms. Hammerle:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the preparation of the 2019-2024 National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program. On behalf of the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners, I write in opposition to any offshore drilling off the coast of Florida. St. Lucie County, Florida is located on the Treasure Coast of Florida, along the Atlantic Ocean and has a population of nearly 300,000. St. Lucie County is committed to protecting our natural environment, especially our twenty-one miles of beaches, nearly half of which are public nature preserves, and the Indian River Lagoon. The Indian River Lagoon is a lagoon of national significance and a 156-mile estuary that is home to more than 4,000 native plants and animals including fish such as tarpon, snook, red drum and sea trout. The health of the Indian River Lagoon is essential to our commercial and recreational fishing industries. The effects of chronic spills and routine drilling operations can have a negative impact on live bottom communities, marine animals, and coastal habitats. Chronic exposure to oil and other residues related to oil and gas drilling can negatively impact the life cycle and food chain of and for commercial and recreational fish.

We are extremely concerned about the potential of drilling off the shores of Florida. Despite taking place hundreds of miles away, the Deepwater Horizon disaster impacted St. Lucie County's tourism industry. We cannot support any actions that may bring that danger closer to our shores. The tourism industry is key to Florida and ecotourism in particular is essential to the economy of St. Lucie County. The state welcomed over 112 million visitors in 2016, bringing \$109 billion into the Florida economy.

The St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners remains opposed to exploration off the coast of Florida. Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comments on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Commissioner Chris Dzadovsky

cc: Governor Rick Scott