


## Comment from Tom Carper, U.S. Senator Tom Carper

The is a Comment on the **Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) Notice: Environmental Impact Statements; Availability, etc.: 2019-2024 Draft Proposed Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program**

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### Comment

Statement of U.S. Senator Tom Carper of Delaware  
On the 2019-2024 National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program  
In conjunction with National OCS Program Public Meeting, Dover, Delaware  
January 18, 2018

I have long advocated for an all-of-the-above strategy to meet our country's energy needs, but the Trump Administration's decision to open up parts of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans and the Gulf of Mexico to more oil and gas drilling at this time is completely unnecessary.

Just eight years ago, we saw very clearly with the Deepwater Horizon disaster that oil spills do not respect state boundaries and that the severe environmental and financial costs of oil spills last for generations. A spill anywhere along the East Coast could easily affect our pristine Delaware beaches and our vibrant coastal communities that rely on fishing, tourism and recreational activities to drive their local economies.

Jeopardizing the environmental and economic health of the entire Atlantic coast is simply not worth the risk, especially when the existing plan, which was the result of extensive public input and research, already makes more than 45 million new barrels of oil available to oil companies. Additionally, just last month as part of their tax bill, Republicans opened up parts of the Arctic to even more drilling. Producing more oil just for the sake of having more oil misses the point, especially as the Administration proposes to do so while at the same time seeking to relax offshore drilling regulations.

Experts and residents living in the communities that will be most impacted by this decision agree that this is the wrong move, especially as the threat of climate change continues to grow. President Trump should listen to them and support them in their efforts to keep their coastal economies thriving in the way that they see fit.

Delaware's concern is not just about oil and gas development, but the activities necessary to move in that direction. For example, our coastal communities here in Delaware, as you will hear, are unanimously opposed to the use of seismic testing air guns, as reflected in city council resolutions from Bethany Beach, Dewey Beach, Fenwick Island, Lewes, Milton, Rehoboth Beach and South Bethany. This opposition has been amplified by a letter sent by over 40 state and local elected officials from Delaware sent to the Department of the Interior in August of 2016 in opposition to proposed seismic surveys. This is just a small part of a chorus of concern resonating throughout the Atlantic seaboard.

While offshore oil and gas development could present economic benefit in selected areas along the coast, these areas are already the beneficiaries of greater economic benefits derived from and contingent on a healthy, vital and sustainable ocean environment off their shores. Clean coastal waters and the ocean ecosystems they support draw millions of coastal visitors and billions of dollars invested in coastal recreation and coastal communities. These communities do not take lightly the prospect of compromising those values, which, with care, will continue to support these communities.

This is exactly the justification that Secretary Zinke used to carve Florida's Gulf coast out of the Trump Administration's proposal. He pointed out that other states like Louisiana, are 'working coasts' that are "very much different than a recreation-centric coast that's in Florida." And it was for the very reasons I've articulated today, and Secretary Zinke so well expressed when exempting Florida from the Administration's proposal, that I strongly oppose the Trump changes. Should the Administration insist and proceed with what the overwhelming majority of my constituents and I believe is a very bad idea, then it should carve out the invaluable, highly protected and cherished Delaware coast and similar areas along the Atlantic from any efforts to change the current plan.

As they say, "what's good for the goose, is good for the gander." Secretary Zinke has clearly established in Florida the standard that should apply to any coastal additions to the five-year offshore leasing plan: if it's coastline where natural values, fishing, recreation, tourism and other uses yield greater economic value, and where local communities are solidly opposed, then do not add them to any oil and gas leasing area. This rule is especially easy to apply at a time where our need for these additional energy resources is minimal.