

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

April 29, 2022

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Chair  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chellie Pingree  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,  
and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Dave Joyce  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,  
and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro, Chairwoman Pingree, Ranking Member Granger, and Ranking Member Joyce:

As you begin your work on the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies appropriations bill for fiscal year 2023 (FY23), we ask that you include bill language prohibiting federal funds from being used to allow for any new oil and gas leasing, pre-leasing, or related activities in Outer Continental Shelf planning areas along the Pacific coast, Atlantic coast, Florida's coast, and the Arctic Ocean. In addition, we request that you again include report language clarifying the definition of pre-leasing activities.

Implementing federal moratoria on offshore oil leasing activities has enjoyed support from both sides of the aisle – including Republican and Democratic administrations alike. That is because many of our constituents have experienced firsthand the devastating impacts oil spills inflict on our economy, fishing communities, and sensitive ecosystems. Our ocean and coastal economies help sustain thriving tourism, fishing, and recreation industries in the Atlantic, Pacific, and eastern Gulf of Mexico. These industries support more than 3.3 million American jobs and generate roughly \$250 billion in gross domestic product (GDP) year after year. In Alaska, where the economy is reliant on healthy oceans, these industries provided over 63,000 jobs and contributed \$4.5 billion to the state's GDP in 2017.

Expanding offshore drilling would jeopardize the livelihoods and economic security of countless Americans across the country who depend on our coastal economies. Nearly 400 municipalities and alliances representing more than 55,000 businesses and over 500,000 Atlantic coast fishing families strongly agree and oppose new drilling.

Past disasters clearly demonstrate the economic risks that new offshore drilling would bring Americans. On the West Coast, the 1969 oil spill off the coast of Santa Barbara, California, spewed more than four million gallons of crude oil into the Pacific Ocean. This was the largest oil spill in U.S. history at the time. Its impacts were so devastating, it led to the creation of the

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) within the federal government. Later in 1988, a spill off the coast of Washington released more than 230,000 gallons of oil and affected over 110 miles of our coastline. More recently, the Plains All American Pipeline spill off Santa Barbara County in 2015 released over 100,000 gallons of crude oil into the environment. It shut down fishing grounds, closed popular beaches, and cost more than \$92 million to clean-up. The second-worst oil spill in U.S. waters occurred in Prince William Sound off the coast of Alaska on March 24, 1989 when the Exxon Valdez oil tanker ran into a reef. Nearly 11 million gallons of crude oil polluted 1,300 miles of coastline and adjacent waters, killing hundreds of thousands of animals, including some whale and seabird populations that have yet to recover. Many fishermen went bankrupt when populations of Pacific herring collapsed. The federal government estimates a 75 percent chance of one or more major oil spills if development moves forward, and experts agree there is no effective way to contain or clean up a spill. With Alaska warming at three times the rate as the rest of the U.S., recent research concluded that all Arctic oil and gas reserves must remain in the ground to avoid dangerous levels of global warming.

Similarly, the Gulf coast experienced the catastrophic impacts of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon disaster, the largest marine oil spill in history to date. The well gushed for 87 days and more than 200 million gallons of oil spewed into the Gulf. This catastrophe devastated the entire region's ecosystem and left a significant human toll. It caused the deaths of 11 rig workers, and an estimated 10 million user-days of beach, fishing, and boating activity were lost in the Gulf region due to closures following the spill. It decimated local economies that rely on fishing, tourism, and marine recreation. Despite removal efforts, an estimated 60 million gallons of oil were left in the Gulf.

In U.S. waters, there were at least [5,900 oil spills between 2010 and 2019](#). [From 2007 to 2020](#) there were 60 fatalities, almost 3,500 injuries, and on average, a fire or explosion every 3 days. We believe this track record makes the expansion of drilling into the Atlantic unwise. Spills there would threaten over 1.7 million jobs and over \$137 billion in GDP along the East Coast for what is estimated to be only seven months' worth of oil and six months' worth of gas.

Until recent presidential executive orders, the Atlantic coast was under imminent threat of harmful pre-leasing activity. In November 2018, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) issued Incidental Harassment Authorizations (IHAs) for five companies to harm marine mammals while conducting large-scale seismic surveys for oil and gas in the Atlantic. Seismic airguns produce loud, repetitive noise that travels underwater up to 2,500 miles and are repeated as often as every ten seconds for days, weeks, or months at a time. Airgun noise can disturb, injure, or kill marine animals from zooplankton at the base of the food web to large whales. The aforementioned IHAs allowed nearly 850 combined days of around-the-clock activity, amounting to more than five million total seismic airgun blasts in an area from Cape May, New Jersey to Cape Canaveral, Florida. This blast zone contains at least 34 species of marine mammals – including the critically endangered North Atlantic right whale and endangered sea turtle – as well as hundreds of species of fish and shellfish, many of which support important commercial and recreational fisheries.

We must take the appropriate steps to protect our nation's coastlines. This issue transcends party lines, with nearly every East and West Coast governor, Republican and Democrat alike, standing

in opposition to drilling off their coasts. Congress should respect this bipartisan outcry and not allow taxpayer funds to be used to put our coastlines at risk.

Accordingly, we ask that you work to include the following language from the FY22 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill in the bill for FY23:

*Sec. \_\_\_\_ . (a) None of the funds made available in this Act may be used by the Secretary of the Interior or the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to conduct or authorize oil and gas preleasing, leasing, or related activities, including but not limited to the issuance of permits for geological and geophysical exploration, in any planning area where the 2017-2022 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Proposed Final Program (November 2016) did not schedule leases. (b) The restrictions under subsection (a) apply to the formal steps identified by the Department of the Interior and the enabling steps prior to leasing, including the issuance of permits for geological and geophysical exploration.*

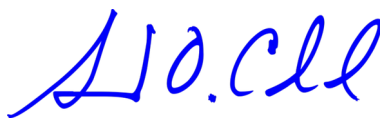
We also ask that you include FY23 report language identical to that in H. Rpt. 117-83 (p 47) clarifying that it is the intent of Congress to prohibit taxpayer dollars from being used for offshore oil pre-leasing activities:

*General Provision.—Within the General Provisions section of this title, the Committee has included a provision which restricts funding for the Bureau’s offshore oil and gas activities to only those planning areas contained in the current 2017–2022 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing program, published in November 2016. The restriction applies to the enabling steps prior to leasing or to the consideration of areas for leasing as part of a leasing program, including the issuance of permits for geological and geophysical exploration. The Committee does not sanction the definition of OCS preleasing activities contained in H. Rpt. 102–116 (p 46– 47) and directs the Bureau to discontinue reliance on that description.*

Inclusion of this language would ensure that federal funds are not used for any oil and gas leasing or pre-leasing activities in FY23, including seismic testing, in planning areas along our coastlines and the Arctic.

Thank you for your consideration of our request to protect our coastal and economic resources. We stand ready to provide any assistance. Please do not hesitate to contact our offices should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



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Salud Carbajal  
Member of Congress



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Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Member of Congress



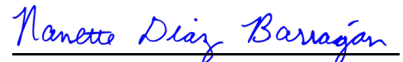
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Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress



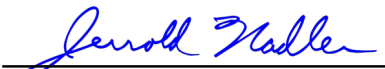
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Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress



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Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress



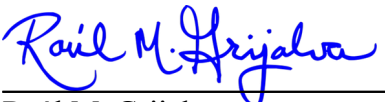
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Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress



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Tom Malinowski  
Member of Congress



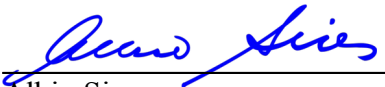
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Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress



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Peter Welch  
Member of Congress



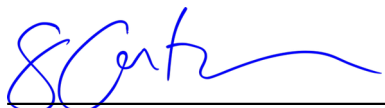
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Albio Sires  
Member of Congress



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Charlie Crist  
Member of Congress



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Sean Casten  
Member of Congress



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Darren Soto  
Member of Congress



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Grace F. Napolitano  
Member of Congress



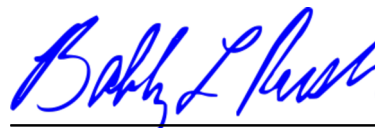
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Katie Porter  
Member of Congress



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Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress



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Bobby L. Rush  
Member of Congress



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Emanuel Cleaver, II  
Member of Congress



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Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress



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Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress



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Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress



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Doris O. Matsui  
Member of Congress  
Energy, Communications and  
Technology



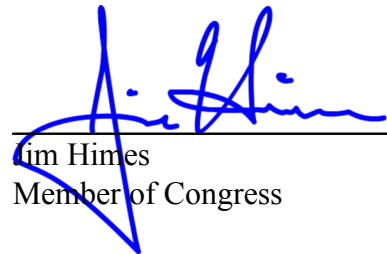
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Scott H. Peters  
Member of Congress



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James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



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Jim Himes  
Member of Congress



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Adam B. Schiff  
Member of Congress




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Mike Levin  
Member of Congress



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Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress



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A. Donald McEachin  
Member of Congress




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Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



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Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



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Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
Member of Congress



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Ted W. Lieu  
Member of Congress



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Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress



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Karen Bass  
Member of Congress



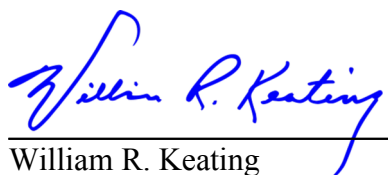
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Marie Newman  
Member of Congress



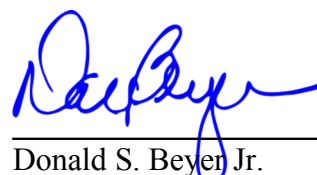
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Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



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William R. Keating  
Member of Congress



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Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress



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Mondaire Jones  
Member of Congress



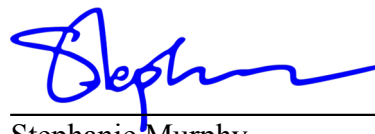
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Deborah K. Ross  
Member of Congress



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Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.  
Member of Congress



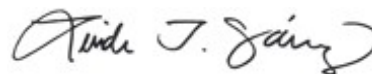
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Stephanie Murphy  
Member of Congress



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Theodore E. Deutch  
Member of Congress



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Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress



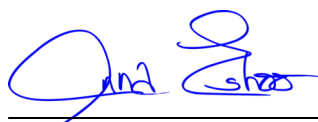
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Lisa Blunt Rochester  
Member of Congress



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Alan S. Lowenthal  
Member of Congress  
Chair, Subcommittee on  
Energy and Mineral  
Resources



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Anna G. Eshoo  
Member of Congress



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Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress



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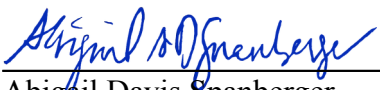
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott  
Member of Congress



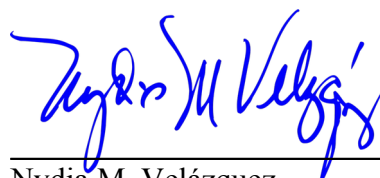
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Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress





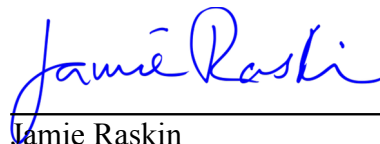
Abigail Davis Spanberger  
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress



Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress



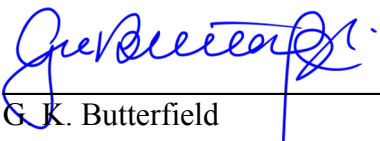
Gwen S. Moore  
Member of Congress



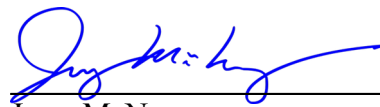
Anthony G. Brown  
Member of Congress



Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.  
Member of Congress



G. K. Butterfield  
Member of Congress



Jerry McNerney  
Member of Congress

*Thomas R. Suozzi*

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Thomas R. Suozzi  
Member of Congress