FIRST PLACE PARTNERS
ESCAMBIA/SANTA ROSA

December 12, 2025

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Re: Opposition to Expansion of Offshore Drilling in the Eastern Gulf Training and Test Range (EGTTR)

Dear Director and BOEM Staff,

First Place Partners, Inc. respectfully submits this letter in opposition to any expansion of offshore oil and gas exploration or drilling activities within or adjacent to the Eastern Gulf Training and Test Range (EGTTR).

First Place Partners, Inc. is an economic development organization focused on strengthening regional economies through sustainable growth, workforce development, and long-term investment strategies. Our work is closely tied to the economic vitality of coastal communities in the Eastern Gulf region, many of which depend on military operations, tourism, fisheries, maritime industries, and emerging technology sectors for stable employment and economic resilience.

The EGTTR is a nationally significant asset that supports critical U.S. Department of Defense training and testing missions. These missions are foundational to the regional economy, supporting thousands of direct and indirect jobs, attracting defense contractors, and anchoring long-term federal investment. Any expansion of offshore drilling in or near the EGTTR poses an unacceptable risk to military readiness, operational flexibility, and national security—all of which have direct and substantial economic consequences for our region.

Beyond defense considerations, offshore drilling expansion introduces significant economic risk to industries that depend on a clean, reliable marine environment. Tourism, commercial and recreational fishing, coastal real estate, and maritime commerce are proven, renewable economic drivers that generate sustained returns year after year. A single spill, discharge, or infrastructure failure could undermine decades of economic development efforts and erode investor confidence across multiple sectors.

From an economic development perspective, the long-term cost of environmental degradation, operational conflicts, and reputational harm far outweighs the short-term gains associated with expanded offshore drilling. Modern economic competitiveness increasingly depends on environmental stewardship, workforce attraction, and quality of life—factors that are fundamentally incompatible with increased industrialization of sensitive offshore training and ecological zones.

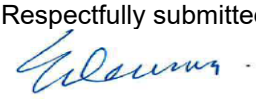
First Place Partners, Inc. strongly encourages BOEM to prioritize:

- Protection of the EGTTR to ensure uninterrupted military operations and associated economic activity
- Preservation of coastal and marine resources that support tourism, fisheries, and maritime industries
- Economic development strategies that emphasize resilience, sustainability, and long-term regional prosperity

For these reasons, we urge the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to exclude the Eastern Gulf Training and Test Range from any plans or approvals related to expanded offshore drilling and to continue recognizing the area's unique national, economic, and strategic importance.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this critical matter. We appreciate BOEM's consideration and stand ready to participate in continued dialogue regarding responsible offshore management and sustainable economic development.

Respectfully submitted,



Ed Carson
Chair
First Place Partners, Inc.