December 19, 2025

Bureau of Ocean Management
1849 C Street
Washington, D.C. 20240

On behalf of the Greater Pensacola Chamber of Commerce and our members, I am writing to you today to express opposition to the expansion of oil or gas leasing off the coast of Florida in the eastern Gulf of America. Opening these waters to oil or gas drilling has the potential to severely impact our way of life in Northwest Florida. Extending the current moratorium on drilling in the eastern Gulf of America will enhance our military readiness, grow our economy, and protect our beautiful environment.

The Gulf Test Range in the Gulf of America is a key component of the Department of War's training and mission readiness. Allowing the potential for oil/gas drilling in this area will significantly impact this training and will impede military readiness for our war fighters. The economic impact of our military bases in Northwest Florida is over $20 billion annually and any hindrance caused by oil/gas drilling could have significant negative impacts on our local economy. As the home to the largest concentration of military veterans in the United States, this is an issue that resonates throughout our community.

This is in addition to the potential negative economic and environmental impact that oil/gas exploration might have on our beautiful waters and beaches along the Gulf of America. The economic impact of tourism is over $2 billion a year in Escambia County, which is largely driven by our world-famous beaches and beautiful waters. We saw the negative impacts on our citizens following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010 which caused crippled our tourism industry and resulted in billions of dollars in losses for our Northwest Florida businesses.

Opening the Gulf of America waters off Florida brings significant risk to our local economy, pristine coastal environment, and military readiness. We respectfully ask that you uphold the current moratorium on oil and gas drilling off Florida's Gulf Coast that runs through 2032.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ildi Hosman
Chair, Board of Directors
Greater Pensacola Chamber of Commerce