

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 24, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As Members of the bipartisan Florida Congressional Delegation, we write to request more information on your recent comments regarding offshore drilling around Florida. We also would like to again express opposition to opening Florida's waters to drilling. Protecting our state's economy and coastal ecosystems from offshore drilling is a critical issue for our constituents. The tourism, fishing, and outdoor recreation economies that drive business in our districts cannot thrive alongside any potential offshore oil and gas development.

On August 1, 2020, in an interview with Spectrum News in Tampa, you acknowledged the overwhelming bipartisan opposition to expanding offshore drilling in Florida. You also referenced an order that you said would protect Florida. However, we are not aware of any such order to remove Florida waters from the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's five-year outer continental shelf (OCS) oil and gas leasing program.

Our understanding is that the waters off Florida's coasts remain on the table for oil and gas development. The administration's current draft proposed program proposes to open Florida's Atlantic coast for lease sales as soon as 2020 and proposes sales for South Florida (Straits of Florida planning area) in 2023. The program also assumes the current federal moratorium on oil and gas leasing activities in the eastern Gulf of Mexico will expire, and the program proposes lease sales in this area for 2023.

Therefore, we request answers to the following questions:

1. To what order or official administrative action were you referring in the Spectrum News interview?
2. Will you formally withdraw the South Atlantic, Straits of Florida, and Eastern Gulf of Mexico planning areas from the administration's proposed OCS program?
3. Will the administration be advancing its 2019-2024 draft proposed program towards the publication of a proposed program or proposed final program? If so, when can we expect the publication of a proposed program or proposed final program?

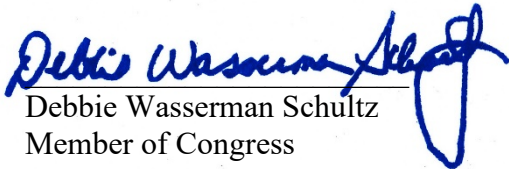
It has been 10 years since the BP *Deepwater Horizon* exploded in the Gulf of Mexico. It was one of the worst environmental disasters in history. The disaster claimed the lives of 11 workers and for months ruined fishing, recreation, and tourism in Gulf states. Florida's beaches and economy are at risk even when oil rigs are hundreds of miles away from our shores.

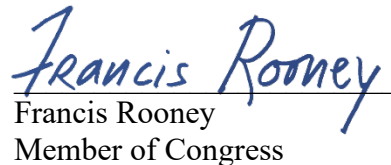
Even more, this is an issue of national security. The Florida Defense Support Task Force supports the protection of the Gulf Test Range from encroachment by oil and gas development. This is because the Department of Defense needs this space to conduct air combat training, testing of air-to-air missiles, hypersonic weapons testing, space launches, and other activities.

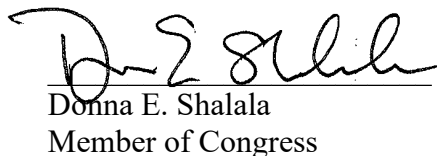
For all these reasons and given Florida's statewide opposition to expanding offshore drilling, it is important that the administration confirm that the expansion of oil or gas drilling in any offshore planning area around Florida is off the table. We also ask that you support and work with the Senate to pass House-passed legislation that would protect Florida's coasts from offshore drilling, such as the Protecting and Securing Florida's Coastline Act of 2019 (H.R. 205) or Interior appropriations provisions that would protect the planning areas around Florida from leasing activities.

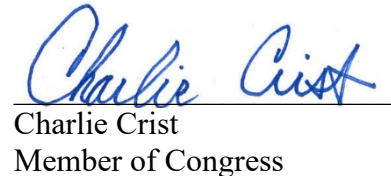
Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to your clarifying any official or formal changes to the administration's offshore drilling policy.

Sincerely,

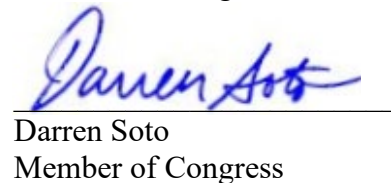

Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress

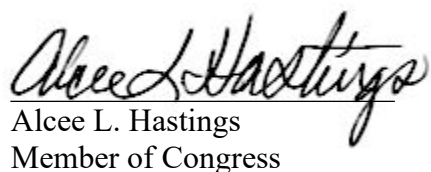

Francis Rooney
Member of Congress

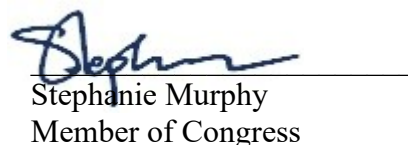

Donna E. Shalala
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Al Lawson
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Val B. Demings
Member of Congress

Frederica S. Wilson

Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress

CC: Secretary Bernhardt, Director Cruickshank