

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 28, 2018

The Honorable Ryan Zinke  
Secretary, Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke,

We write today to express our strong opposition to proposed revisions to the Well Control Rule (FR 2018-109305), published in the Federal Register on May 11, 2018. This critical safety regulation was put into place at the recommendation of the National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill to improve the safety of offshore drilling operations and prevent another tragedy from occurring. The Well Control Rule is a culmination of years of information gathering and engagement with the public, stakeholders, and industry.

As Floridians, we understand all too well the risks that offshore drilling poses to our environment and economy. The Deepwater Horizon tragedy dumped more than 200 million gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico, claimed the lives of 11 workers, injured 17 others, and crippled our fishing and tourism industries. The full extent of the tragedy is still unknown; and we continue to feel the effects on our coastal communities, oceans, and marine life. Given the magnitude of the Deepwater Horizon disaster, these safety regulations are more than warranted.

This proposal to weaken the Well Control Rule will not only risk lives, but could inflict devastating consequences on our environment and economy. Of particular concern are proposals to eliminate the requirement for third-party verification by the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE), remove real-time monitoring requirements, and allow companies to submit equipment failures anonymously through a third-party designee, effectively making that requirement voluntary.

The new proposal could also undermine additional safety measures that were adopted in the aftermath of the Deepwater Horizon tragedy by removing the federal government's authority to regulate safe maximum or minimum drilling pressures at new sites. In fact, according to a report from Bloomberg, "the bureau (BSEE) isn't completely ruling out changes to that drilling margin requirement. Instead, it is [BSEE] inviting oil companies and other stakeholders to answer questions about how the standard is working during a 60-day public comment period." The current drilling margin regulation requires offshore oil rigs to maintain a safe pressure for drilling in order to prevent surges and potential blowouts similar to what occurred in the Deepwater Horizon spill.

The weakening of these safety regulations is compounded by the Interior Department's plans to dramatically expand offshore drilling in nearly all U.S. waters, including the South Atlantic, the

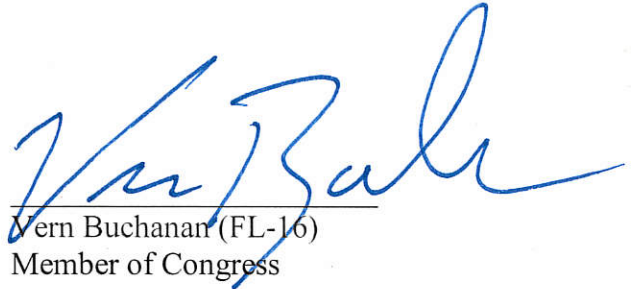
Straits of Florida, and the still recovering Gulf of Mexico. This underscores the need for robust safety standards to protect our coasts from another needless accident.

We urge you to reverse course and leave all portions of the Well Control Rule in place. Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



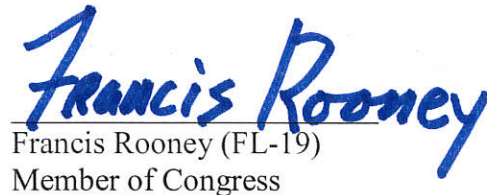
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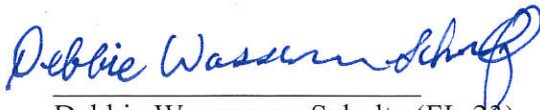
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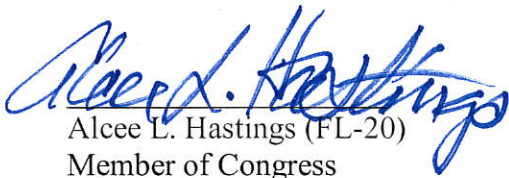
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Debbie Wasserman Schultz (FL-23)  
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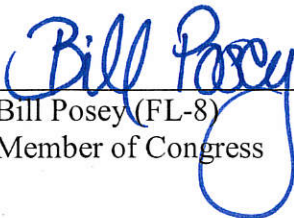
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Alcee L. Hastings (FL-20)  
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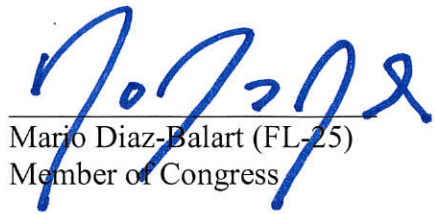
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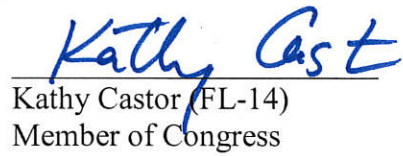


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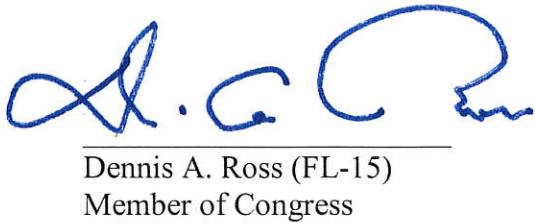
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Mario Diaz-Balart (FL-25)  
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Kathy Castor (FL-14)  
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Dennis A. Ross (FL-15)  
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Frederica S. Wilson (FL-24)  
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Stephanie Murphy (FL-7)  
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Gus M. Bilirakis (FL-12)  
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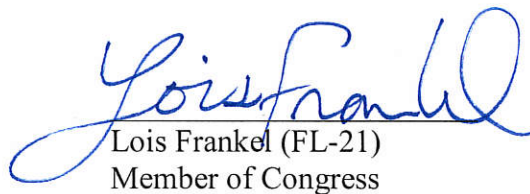
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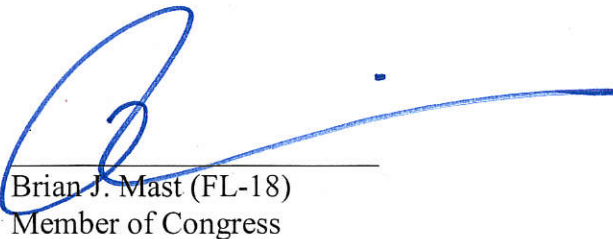
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John Rutherford (FL-4)  
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Lois Frankel (FL-21)  
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Brian J. Mast (FL-18)  
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