

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

May 11, 2017

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

Dear Secretary Zinke:

On April 28, 2017, President Trump signed an executive order directing the Department of the Interior (DOI) to review where offshore drilling should be occurring and to potentially start a new 5-year planning process for offshore leasing. As Members of Congress opposed to new oil and gas leasing off the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, we urge you to continue to adhere to the recently approved 2017-2022 Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Leasing Program (Program) and keep the Atlantic and Pacific OCS Regions off-limits to any new oil and gas lease sales.

The 2017-2022 Program was developed carefully and in full accordance of Section 18 of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, starting with a Request for Information published on June 16, 2014, and finishing over two and a half years later with the signing of the Record of Decision on January 17, 2017. During the process, BOEM received over 3.4 million comments and held 13 public meetings across the country. In recognition of the strong opposition of residents, businesses, and elected officials along the East and West Coasts, BOEM did not include any new lease sales in either the Atlantic or Pacific oceans in the final Program.

Opposition to new leasing in the Pacific OCS dates back to the 1969 Santa Barbara blowout, which killed thousands of birds and marine mammals and blackened the beaches of Southern California. While the Atlantic seaboard has been spared the direct impact of an offshore oil blowout, 121 municipalities, over 1,200 elected officials, tens of thousands of businesses, and hundreds of thousands of fishermen from up and down the East Coast have expressed opposition to oil and gas leasing or exploration in the Atlantic, in recognition of the critical role that clean beaches and oceans play in the economy of the entire region.<sup>1</sup> According to data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, tourism and fishing on the East Coast are responsible for over 1.3 million jobs and support a \$63 billion economy. On the West Coast, tourism and fishing support 536,000 jobs and support a \$26 billion economy.<sup>2</sup> Importantly, these are sustainable industries, able to support jobs and regional economies indefinitely into the future provided our oceans and coastlines are managed smartly. We do not believe that new oil and gas exploration or production activity in the Atlantic and Pacific OCS is compatible with the sustainable coastal economies on which so many of our constituents and communities depend.

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<sup>1</sup> A more comprehensive list of organizations, towns, and officials opposed to drilling in the Atlantic is available at <http://usa.oceana.org/climate-and-energy/grassroots-opposition-atlantic-drilling-and-seismic-airgun-blasting>

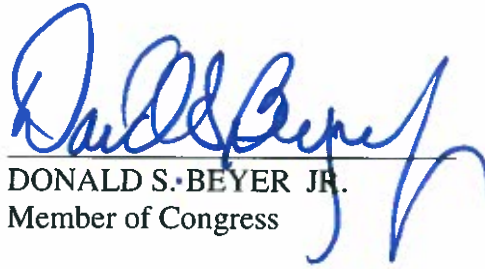
<sup>2</sup> National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, *Economics: National Ocean Watch*, available at <https://www.coast.noaa.gov/enowexplorer/#/>; accessed March 8, 2017.

As you conduct a review of our nation's existing oil and gas leases, we again strongly urge you to reject proposals to open the Atlantic and Pacific OCS Regions to new offshore drilling and exploration. We look forward to working with you during your tenure as Secretary, and thank you for your attention to this letter.

Sincerely,



ALAN LOWENTHAL  
Member of Congress



DONALD S. BEYER JR.  
Member of Congress



ANTHONY BROWN  
Member of Congress



FRANK A. LOBIONDO  
Member of Congress



DAVE REICHERT  
Member of Congress



MARK SANFORD  
Member of Congress



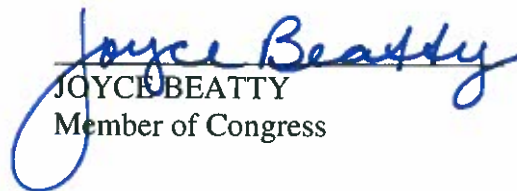
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Member of Congress



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JOHN YARMUTH  
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MARK DESAULNIER  
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JOSH GOTTHEIMER  
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ELIZABETH H. ESTY  
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ALMA S. ADAMS  
Member of Congress



THOMAS R. SUOZZI  
Member of Congress



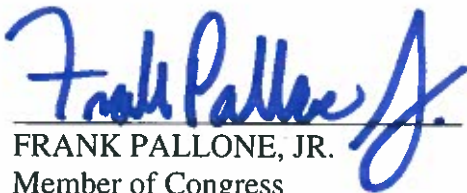
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A. DONALD MCEACHIN  
Member of Congress



PRAMILA JAYAPAL  
Member of Congress

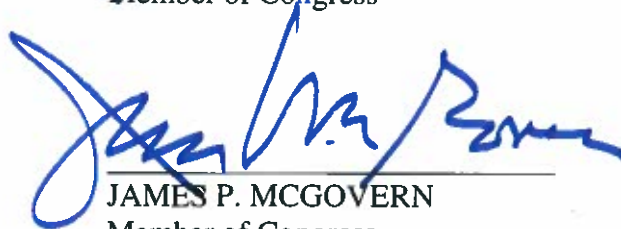
  
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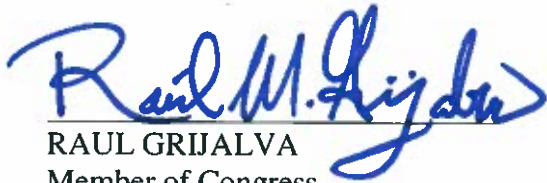
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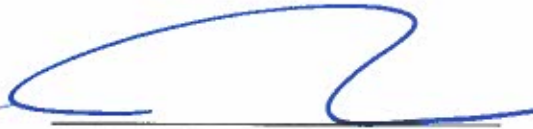
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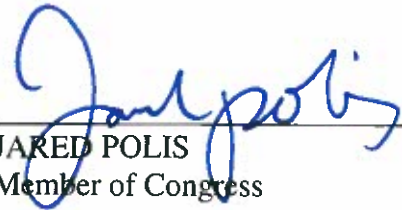
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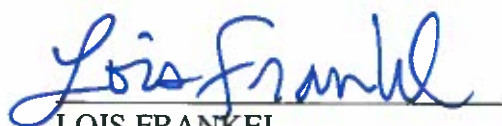
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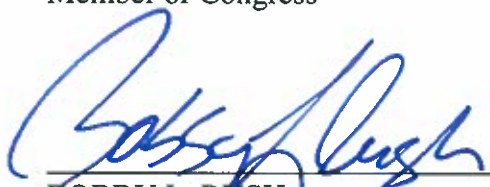
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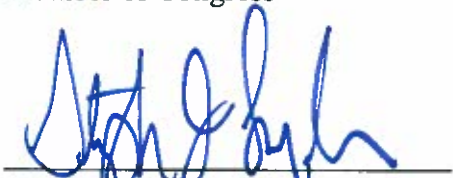
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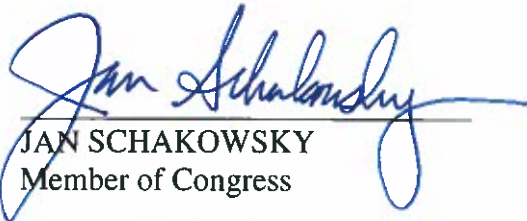
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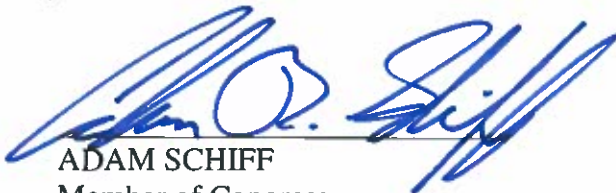
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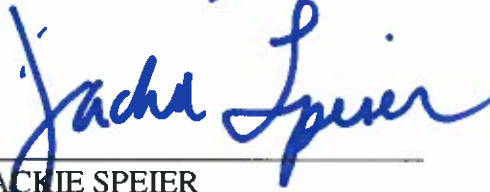
  
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PAUL TONKO  
Member of Congress

  
JACKIE SPEIER  
Member of Congress

  
LOUISE M. SLAUGHTER  
Member of Congress

cc: Walter Cruickshank, Acting Director, BOEM

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PETER WELCH  
Member of Congress



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CAROL SHEA-PORTER  
Member of Congress