

January 17, 2018

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke,

We write today to express our joint opposition to the leasing, exploration, development and production of oil and gas in the Atlantic Ocean as proposed by the 2019-2024 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program. We also write to request that our states and the Atlantic Coast be exempt from this program.

Like Florida, each of our states has unique natural resources and an economy that is reliant on tourism as an essential driver. We support the notion of energy diversity, but the environmental and economic importance of the Atlantic Ocean must be weighed against the potential unintended consequences of these types of activities.

More than one hundred and forty (140) local communities passed resolutions opposing offshore drilling in the Atlantic. They have also been joined by tourism associations, convention and visitors bureaus (CVB's), businesses, trade groups, and legislators from both sides of the aisle.

Not only are ocean and oceanside resources at risk, but also nearby bays, estuaries, coastal communities, iconic natural areas, and ports. The irreversible impact on ecosystems including marine mammals, fish, sea turtles, and other aquatic life that inhabit the ocean offshore is gravely concerning, as is potential risk and harm to our state's economies, our natural resources, our military installations, and our residents.

We appreciate the emphasis that you have placed on public input and urge you to grant our request to be exempt from this program.

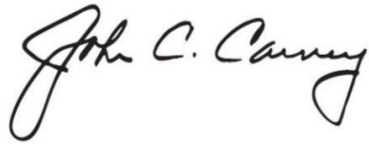
Sincerely,



Governor Larry Hogan
Maryland



Governor Dannel P. Malloy
Connecticut



Governor John C. Carney
Delaware



Governor Roy Cooper
North Carolina



Governor Charles D. Baker
Massachusetts



Governor Gina M. Raimondo
Rhode Island



Governor Ralph S. Northam
Virginia

cc: Todd Willens, Assistant Deputy Secretary & Acting Assistant Secretary for
Fish and Wildlife and Parks, U.S. Department of the Interior

Scott C. Hommel, Chief of Staff, U.S. Department of the Interior

Todd M. Wynn, Director of Intergovernmental and External Affairs, U.S.
Department of the Interior