

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 11, 2018

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

Dear Secretary Zinke:

In light of the recent release of the 2019-2014 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Draft Proposed Program, we write to extend an invitation to you to personally visit New Jersey and meet with some of the people who would be most impacted by the plan. Given your recent meeting with Florida Governor Rick Scott, after which you decided to exclude Florida's coasts from any offshore drilling, we believe that New Jersey also deserves the courtesy of a Secretarial visit. We also request that the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management consider holding a public hearing in New Jersey, in addition to the public meeting scheduled in Trenton, and that you consider doing so in a coastal community.

New Jersey's coastal economy is one of the primary drivers of job creation and economic growth in our State. In 2016, New Jersey's tourism industry generated over \$44 billion, directly supported over 321,000 jobs, and indirectly supported more than 517,000 jobs—a total of nearly 10% of the state's workforce. Beyond our workforce, the homes and businesses that make up New Jersey's shore communities are valued at nearly \$800 billion.


Also critical to the state's economic health is a thriving fishing industry. In 2015, New Jersey's commercial seafood industry supported over 31,000 jobs. We are also home to one of the largest saltwater recreational fishing industries in the nation, which supports over 16,000 jobs and generates nearly \$1.5 billion in statewide economic impacts.


Drilling off the coast of New Jersey puts each of these critical economic drivers at risk, and for that reason, we strongly oppose the recently-issued Draft Proposed Plan. Our concerns are shared by generations of New Jersey families who have lived and vacationed along our pristine shores; by fishers whose livelihoods depend on clean coastal waters; and by the small businesses that rely on tourism to earn a family wage and to create jobs.

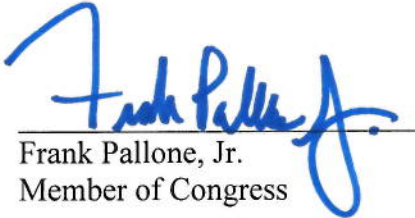
We invite you to personally visit New Jersey prior to the issuance of the Proposed Program, to learn firsthand about how offshore drilling would harm our communities and our economy. We would be happy to facilitate such a visit and connect you with the individuals who have the most to lose in the event of an oil spill. Many of these individuals are still working to rebuild after the devastation of Superstorm Sandy, and cannot afford the risk of another disaster in the form of an oil spill.

Thank you for your consideration, and we hope to host you in New Jersey soon.


Sincerely,



Robert Menendez
United States Senator


Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Albio Sires
Member of Congress



Leonard Lance
Member of Congress



Donald Norcross
Member of Congress



Frank A. LoBiondo
Member of Congress

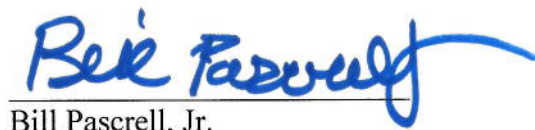

Tom MacArthur
Member of Congress


Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress


Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress


Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress


Rodney P. Frelinghuysen
Member of Congress


Bill Pascrell, Jr.
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