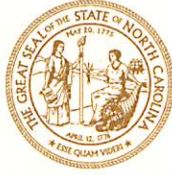


*Office of the Governor  
State of North Carolina*

*Roy Cooper  
Governor*



20301 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, N.C. 27699-0301

August 17, 2017

Ms. Kelly Hammerle  
National Program Manager  
U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management  
45600 Woodland Road  
Mailstop VAM-LD  
Sterling, VA 20166

Dear Ms. Hammerle:

Thank you for your letter dated June 29, 2017, notifying me that the U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) intends to develop a new National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program (OCS Leasing Plan) for the years 2019-2024. In response to BOEM's recent Request for Information and Comments on the preparation of the OCS Leasing Plan, I write to convey North Carolina's opposition to oil and gas leasing off North Carolina's coast.

As explained in the attached comments prepared by the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality, offshore drilling threatens our coastal economy and environment, yet offers little economic benefit to North Carolina. Coastal tourism generates \$3 billion annually in North Carolina and supports more than 30,000 jobs in the eastern part of the state. Commercial fishing brings in hundreds of millions of additional dollars each year. In addition, North Carolina has over 300 miles of coastline, 2.3 million acres of estuarine waters, and over 10,000 miles of estuarine shoreline. We cannot afford to endanger our ecologically sensitive coastlines or the natural resources that are the foundation of our state's tourism industry and coastal economy.

Because offshore drilling threatens North Carolina's critical coastal industries and unique coastal environment with limited benefits for our citizens, it is a bad deal for North Carolina.

Accordingly, I ask that you respect the wishes of our state and maintain in the new OCS Leasing Plan the current prohibition of oil and gas drilling off North Carolina's coast.

With kind regards, I am

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roy Cooper".  
Roy Cooper