

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 9, 2018

Secretary Ryan Zinke
Department of Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke,

As you are aware, the New Jersey Delegation is unified in our opposition to the recent proposal to open the U.S. outer continental shelf off the coast of New Jersey to oil and gas exploration and development. We write once again to voice our unaltered opposition, to reiterate our request for a public comment session, and to bring to your attention a recent citizens' public forum put on by concerned citizens in New Jersey.

We have each unequivocally stated our disapproval. This has included joining together as a delegation in a January 9 letter asking you to reconsider the proposal, as well as a January 11 letter inviting you to visit New Jersey prior to the issuance of a finalized proposal and requesting that the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) hold a public hearing, allowing participants to voice their concerns to BOEM officials.

As of this date we have been made aware of no such hearings by your Department for this purpose. As the comment period closes on March 9, we felt it imperative to provide you with the opinions of our constituents: those who know the Jersey Shore the best.

Therefore, we respectfully submit into the record the enclosed transcript of a citizens' public forum conducted on February 14, 2018 in Hamilton, New Jersey. The Valentine's Day proceeding was organized by a consortium of concerned individuals and environmental organizations whose members have a deep and abiding love for the ocean, and contains the testimony of many of our constituents.

We believe that given the magnitude of this decision and the very real impact this would have on New Jersey's coastal economy, environment, and wildlife, it is of paramount importance that the enclosed comments of New Jerseyans are considered. Taking into consideration a sampling of the 321,000 residents working in tourism, 31,000 people employed by commercial fishing, and 16,000 individuals employed in the recreational fishing industries, as well as all those who are deeply invested in New Jersey's coast, will provide unique insight on the possible impact of this decision. 1.4 million jobs and over \$95 billion in gross domestic product—as well as New Jersey's water quality, pristine beaches, and wildlife—are at stake.

We urge you to review this document and give due consideration to our constituents' concerns. Before any final decision is made, we implore you to review their viewpoints—and respectfully once again ask for a public comment session.

Sincerely,




CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress



FRANK A. LOBIONDO
Member of Congress



ROBERT MENENDEZ
United States Senator



CORY A. BOOKER
United States Senator



RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN
Member of Congress




DONALD M. PAYNE, JR.
Member of Congress



TOM MACARTHUR
Member of Congress



LEONARD LANCE
Member of Congress



ALBIO SIRES
Member of Congress



FRANK PALLONE, JR.
Member of Congress

Bill Pascrell Jr Donald Norcross
BILL PASCRELL, JR.
Member of Congress

DONALD NORCROSS
Member of Congress

Bonnie Watson Coleman
BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN
Member of Congress

Josh Gottheimer
JOSH GOTTHEIMER
Member of Congress