

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 28, 2017

Secretary Ryan Zinke
Department of Interior
1849 C St NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke,

We are writing in strong opposition to your recent secretarial order (#3350) to move forward with offshore oil and gas exploration in the Atlantic Ocean, and the subsequent issuance of five Incidental Harassment Authorizations (IHAs) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for Atlantic geophysical & geological (G&G) permit applications.

This decision to move forward with permits for seismic airgun surveys for subsea oil and gas deposits puts at risk the vibrant Atlantic Coast economies dependent on healthy ocean ecosystems, which generate \$95 billion in gross domestic product and support nearly 1.4 million jobs each year.

Offshore oil and gas exploration and development, the first step of which is seismic airgun testing, puts at risk coastal economies based on fishing, tourism, and recreation. Numerous studies show the detrimental impacts seismic airgun blasting has on fisheries and marine mammals, thereby affecting the catch anglers bring dockside and the revenue generated by related businesses. A 2014 study conducted off North Carolina's coast by the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, Duke University and NOAA found that, during seismic surveying, the abundance of reef-fish declined by 78 percent during evening hours, a time of day when fish use of that same habitat was highest on the previous three days when seismic surveys were not being conducted. The tertiary effects of this trickle down to fishing businesses, restaurants and the visitors that flock to our coastal communities.

Some proponents of opening drilling in the Atlantic make the argument that seismic airgun surveys for oil and gas deposits would allow local communities to learn more about what resources might be available. The reality is that, by law, the data obtained from seismic surveys are proprietary and only available to the oil and gas industry. The public, local government officials and even Members of Congress would not have access to the survey data. This inability to access information leaves coastal communities without the opportunity to perform substantive cost-benefit analyses for extracting oil and gas reserves off their coasts. Our constituents would be left taking on significant risk without being involved in future development decisions.

We hear from countless business owners, elected officials and residents along our coasts who recognize and reject the risks of offshore oil and gas development. More than 120 local

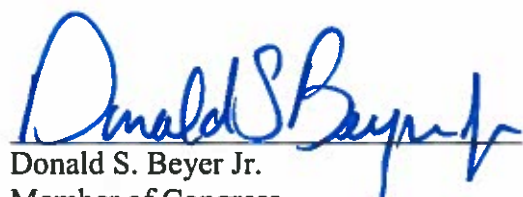
governments have passed formal resolutions opposing oil and gas exploration and/or drilling in the Atlantic or Eastern Gulf. These include numerous local chambers of commerce, tourism and restaurant associations, commercial and recreational fishing associations, and the Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils. More than 41,000 businesses and 500,000 commercial fishing families strongly oppose offshore oil and gas exploration and drilling. Further, NASA, the Department of Defense, and the Florida Defense Support Task Force have also expressed concern with offshore oil and gas development threatening their ability to perform critical activities.

Opening the Atlantic to seismic testing and drilling jeopardizes our coastal businesses, fishing communities, tourism, and our national security. It harms our coastal economies in the near term and opens the door to even greater risks from offshore oil and gas production down the road. Therefore, we implore you not to issue any permits for seismic airgun surveys for subsea oil and gas deposits in the Atlantic Ocean.

Sincerely,



John Rutherford
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Mark Sanford
Member of Congress



Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress




Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress



Darren Soto
Member of Congress



Michael Capuano
Member of Congress



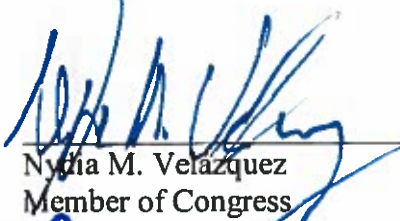
Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



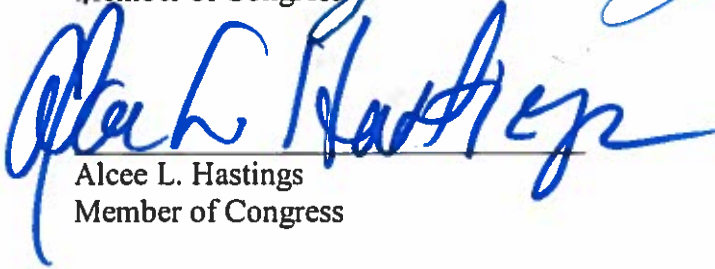
Bill Posey
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velazquez
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



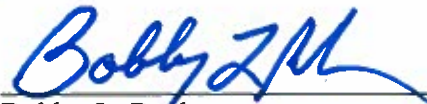
Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



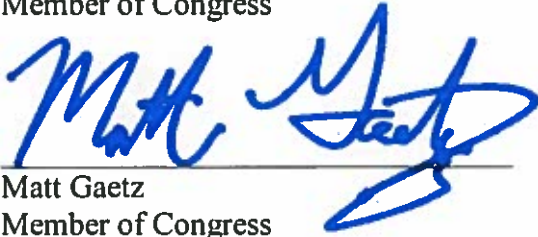
Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress



Katherine Clark
Member of Congress



Niki Tsongas
Member of Congress



Matt Gaetz
Member of Congress



Charlie Crist
Member of Congress



Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



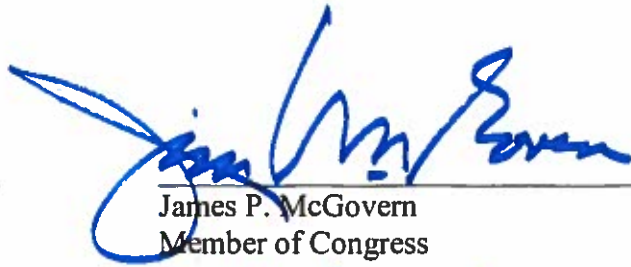
Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Carol Shea-Porter
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Louise M. Slaughter
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



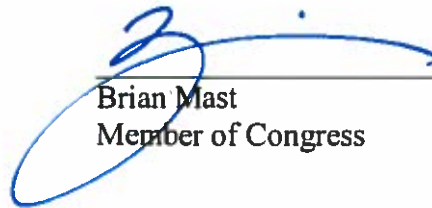
John Sarbanes
Member of Congress



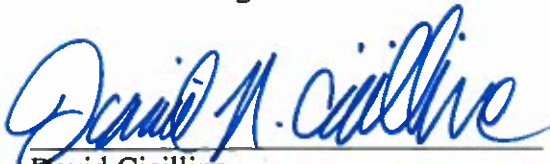
Frederica Wilson
Member of Congress



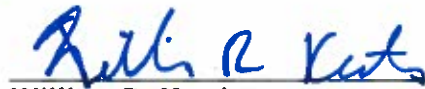
Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress



Brian Mast
Member of Congress



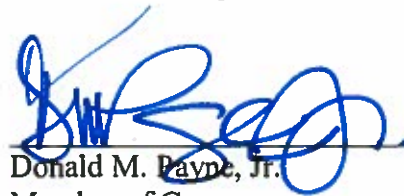
David Cicilline
Member of Congress



William R. Keating
Member of Congress



Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress



Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



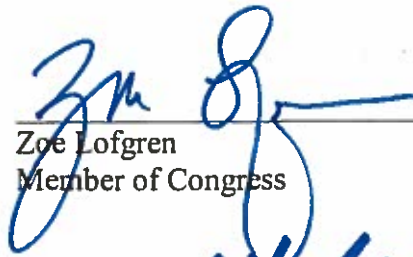
Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



Frank A. LoBiondo
Member of Congress



Dennis A. Ross
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Daniel W. Lipinski
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



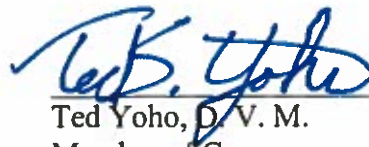
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Val B. Demings
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Ted Yoho, D/V. M.
Member of Congress



Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



Francis Rooney
Member of Congress



William Lacy Clay
Member of Congress



Yvette Clarke
Member of Congress



Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress

David Price

David E. Price
Member of Congress

Mike Quigley

Mike Quigley
Member of Congress

Keith Ellison

Keith Ellison
Member of Congress

Jerry McNamee

Jerry McNamee
Member of Congress

Jared Polis

Jared Polis
Member of Congress

Joe Crowley

Joe Crowley
Member of Congress

John Conyers, Jr.

John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress

John Yarmuth

John Yarmuth
Member of Congress

Donald Norcross

Donald Norcross
Member of Congress

José E. Serrano

José E. Serrano
Member of Congress

Brendan F. Boyle

Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

Grace Meng

Grace Meng
Member of Congress

Matthew A. Cartwright

Matthew A. Cartwright
Member of Congress



Ted Deutch
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



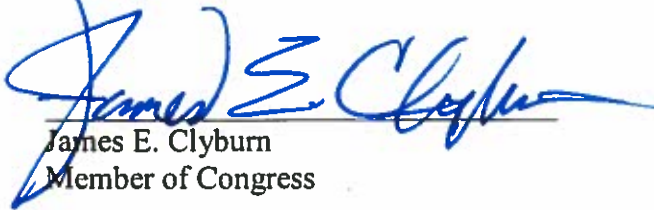
James R. Langevin
Member of Congress



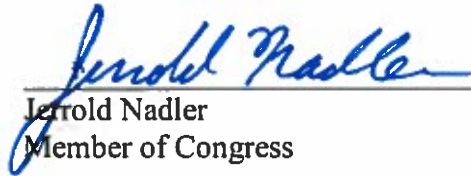
Adam Schiff
Member of Congress



Ron DeSantis
Member of Congress



James E. Clyburn
Member of Congress



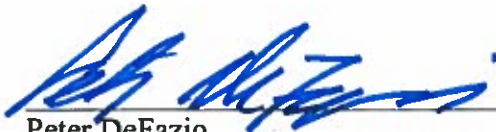
Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



Al Lawson
Member of Congress



Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress



C.A. Dutch Ruppberger
Member of Congress

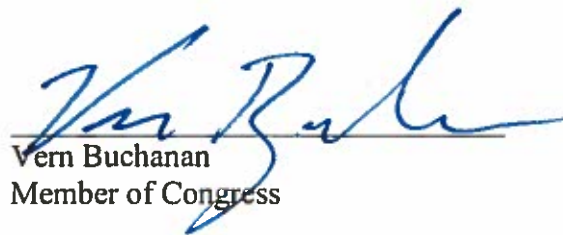


Luis V. Gutiérrez
Member of Congress

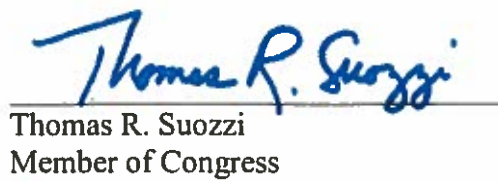


Betty McCollum
Member of Congress


Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress


Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress


Alma S. Adams
Member of Congress


Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress


A. Donald McEachin
Member of Congress


Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress


Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress

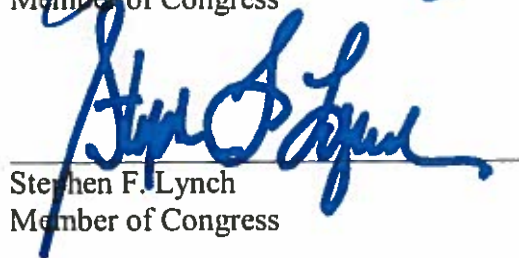

Stephanie Murphy
Member of Congress


John Lewis
Member of Congress


Nanette Diaz Barragan
Member of Congress


Elijah E. Cummings
Member of Congress


G.K. Butterfield
Member of Congress


Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress


Joseph P. Kennedy, III
Member of Congress



Mike Doyle
Member of Congress



Paul Tonko
Member of Congress



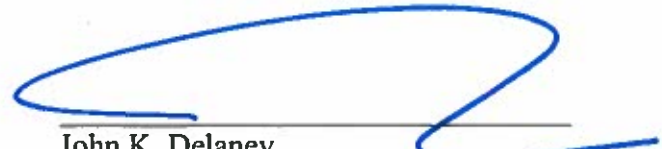
Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress




Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



Jackie Speier
Member of Congress



John K. Delaney
Member of Congress



Peter Welch
Member of Congress