

President Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

December 12th, 2016

Dear President Obama,

As small business owners along the Atlantic Coast, we want to thank you for abandoning plans to open the Atlantic to offshore oil and gas drilling through 2022. Our opposition to offshore drilling along the Atlantic coast existed because of its risks to our coasts and our livelihoods, such opposition that will extend beyond five years.

Before leaving office, you have an opportunity to decide the fate of the Atlantic Ocean, not just for five years, but for good. Thus, we urge you to permanently protect the Atlantic Ocean from oil and gas exploration and development.

Leading up to the administration's decision in March of 2016, over 1,000 small businesses expressed their opposition to Atlantic offshore drilling in the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's 2017-2022 Oil and Gas Leasing Program draft plan. This business opposition existed because of the risks posed to our beaches and coastal communities by oil and gas exploration and development.

Our coasts are lined with beaches visited by tens of millions annually, national wildlife refuges, parks and sensitive marshes and bays. They support a robust fishing and tourism industry, hundreds of miles of beaches and marsh environments, and important ocean ecosystems.

Oil and gas exploration and production is simply incompatible with the Atlantic coast. When you drill, you spill and day to day drilling operations result in chronic pollution and the industrialization of the coast for oil facilities. Look no further than the devastation the BP Deepwater Horizon catastrophe brought to the Gulf of Mexico's fishing, tourism and wildlife to recognize the impact drilling would have here on the Atlantic Coast.

For the sake of our beaches, coastal communities and the significant boon coastal tourism provides to our economy, we the undersigned local business leaders strongly urge you to ensure permanent protection of the Atlantic Ocean by withdrawing it from all future oil and gas development.

The potential economic losses that offshore drilling would bring to our existing coastal economies and the potential for damage to treasured coasts and marine resources would be devastating. Tourism in East Coast states generates billions of dollars in economic activity and supports over one million jobs. On the Atlantic coast, nearly 1.4 million jobs and \$95 billion in gross domestic product rely on clean beaches and a healthy ocean environment. Our clean beaches, coasts and oceans are worth too much to risk to the dangers of offshore drilling.

The potential short-term economic gain drilling would bring to our economy is not worth sacrificing the immense and sustained value our coastal tourism and fishing industries bring to Atlantic Coast states and the entire United States.

Our coasts are worth too much to risk. We thank you for recognizing the concerns of coastal communities and small businesses in your decision to exclude the Atlantic from the 2017-2022 oil and gas leasing program. Rather than exposing our beaches, families and businesses to the inherent risks of drilling, the administration ensured protection of our beaches and tourism industry for the next five years.

With the long-term fate of the Atlantic Ocean yet to be decided, we call on you to ensure these vital and spectacular resources are protected for generations to come by permanently protecting the Atlantic Ocean from all future oil and gas development.

Signed,

Connecticut (Anne Cheng of Kajesta LLC, Craig Chessari of Master Woodworker); **Delaware** (Bruce Troutman of Heritage Rentals LLC); **Florida** (Mari Mennel-Bell of JazzSLAM, William Cannon of Predator Services, Ronnie Bolling of SouthStar Capital LLC, Ross Kelson of GageGo.com, Deborah London of RE/MAX Preferred, Martin of Bookbuilders New York Inc, Pam Worsham of Cocoa Beach Parasail, John Thomas of Thomas Enterprises, Patricia DeLuca of Rick's Custom Painting, Julia Meadows of 341 Lofts LLC, Marcia Hoodwin of Accents Away, Laurie Murphy of Emerald Coastkeeper Inc, Benjamin Joannou Jr. of J&B Importers Inc, Eric West of Eagle Yachts, Pamela Hare of Gates Management Services Inc, Alan Bock of Mellon Patch Inn, Ella Dragif); **Massachusetts** (Leda Zimmerman of RiverRun Media, Jeff Miner of Greeneffects Building & Design, Jonathan Kava of Green Homes Carpet Cleaning, Donya Melanson of Donya Melanson Associates); **Maryland** (Jamie Agins of Jamie Agins Art Glass, Joan Gugerty of Heartworks Wellness, Robby Roberts of Pure Board Shop); **New Hampshire** (Jennifer Burr of Jennifer Burr Gardens); **North Carolina** (Erin Whittle of Erin Whittle Photography, Emily Barlas of Flytrap Brewing, Michelle Dorer of Ashtanga Yoga Center, Micki Tucker of The Pink Palace of Topsail, Christine Lamb of Pecan Tree Inn, Danielle Bourgeois of Sweetwater Surf Shop, Candace Young of Bay River Pottery, Aurelie Ward of

Health-Ward Group LLC, Dr. Barbara Francis-Heckman and Nancy Francis-Heckman of Beaufort Pet Provisions Inc, Sharyn Smith of Outer Banks Yoga, Robert Rust of Waterbug Tours, Patricia Davis of Tierra Fina, Shawn Deane of Secret Spot Surf Shop, Chris Marik of Ocean Atlantic Rentals, Megan Vaughan of Cola Vaughan Realty, Chelsea Czuchra of Inner Ear Music, Jo Pickett of Crystal South Surf Camp, Laura Sturgell of Crystal Coast Cuisine, Jessica Moody of Village Yoga, Mary Baggett of Four Seasons Management Services and Blockade Runner Beach Resort, Michael Paul of Hot Wax Surf Shop, Georgia Mason of Georgia Mason Art, Ben Elliott of Custom Audio, Katherine Bottjen of Sail Outer Banks, Tricia Stopowski of Wild About Nature OBX, Greg Hamby of Cypress Moon Inn); **New York** (Abraham Rozman of Canary Express, Jay Braun of Melody Lanes LLC, Jerry & Judy Ravnitzky of Antiques); **New Jersey** (Linda Rossin of Linda Rossin Studios); **Rhode Island** (Lisa Davis of Crunchi Cosmetics); **South Carolina** (Dave Smith of Senior Express); **Virginia** (Mary Ann Calvert of Mary's Custom Quilts, Marcia Carter of Massage by Marcia)