



TOWN OF KILL DEVIL HILLS

Post Office Box 1719, 102 Town Hall Drive
Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina 27948
252-449-5300
www.kdhnc.com

Mayor
SHEILA F. DAVIES, PhD

Mayor Pro Tem
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Assistant Town Manager
SHAWN R. MURPHY

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MARY E. QUIDLEY

Town Attorney
CASEY C. VARNELL

Dr. Walter Cruickshank
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Acting Director
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

January 24, 2018

Dear Dr. Cruickshank,

On behalf of the residents and constituents of Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina, we are writing to respectfully request an extension of the March 9, 2018, deadline to submit comments on the Draft Proposed Program (DPP) for the Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program for 2019-2024 and on scoping for the required Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCSLA) provides for a 60-day comment period following the release of the DPP. Given the large scope of the DPP, we believe a 60-day extension of the deadline for comments is necessary to allow for more public hearings in coastal areas and to give the public sufficient time to draft comments on offshore drilling proposed for nearly the entire U.S. Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), encompassing over 90 percent of total OCS acreage – the largest number of potential offshore lease sales ever proposed.¹

Section 18 of OCSLA provides for the development of an oil and gas leasing program that considers “economic, social, and environmental values” of the resources of the OCS and the potential impacts of oil and gas exploration on the marine, coastal and human environments.² Upon consideration of the comments received during the Request for Information comment period last year, this DPP identifies a preliminary list of OCS planning areas and schedule for proposed lease sales during the 2019-2024 period. We are very concerned that this DPP includes North, Mid, and South Atlantic Planning Areas that were rightly excluded from the 2017-2022 program.

¹ U.S. Department of Interior, *Secretary Zinke Announces Plan for Unleashing America’s Offshore Oil and Gas Potential* (Jan. 4, 2018), <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/secretary-zinke-announces-plan-unleashing-americas-offshore-oil-and-gas-potential>

² 43 U.S.C. §1344(a)(1).

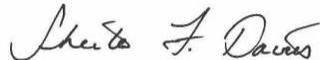
The previous 2017-2022 program was developed over three years, and incorporated millions of comments from the public, scientists, industry, business owners, and other stakeholders. The exclusion of the Arctic, Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and Eastern Gulf of Mexico was a reflection of the significant economic, social, and environmental risks posed by oil and gas development in those areas, as well as strong community opposition. Local and regional concerns over offshore oil and gas activities have only grown since the 2017-2022 program was finalized, with over 150 East and West Coast municipalities formally opposing offshore drilling activities off their shores, including seismic airgun surveys.

The opportunity for the public to provide input on the DPP is critical given the new, large scope of the DPP and its potential impacts on coastal communities and economies, the marine environment, and climate. We do not believe that the 23 currently announced “open house” style meetings are adequate in duration, location, nor format needed to meet the public input requirements. There should be more meetings in coastal communities, large and small, in all areas included in the DPP, as well as non-coastal areas to allow for as many impacted voices as possible to raise their concerns. In addition, formal oral testimony, as opposed to an “open house” format, would better ensure that people’s concerns are heard and recorded publicly.

Accordingly, we request that BOEM hold public hearings in the following municipalities in addition to the already announced Raleigh location to meet with stakeholders who will be most directly impacted by the proposed expanded drilling: Kill Devil Hills, Morehead City and Wilmington, North Carolina.

We respectfully request a full and fair opportunity for the most directly impacted stakeholders to provide feedback on the DPP and on scoping for the Programmatic EIS through an extension of the comment period deadline to May 8, 2018, meetings in at least three additional coastal communities in North Carolina, and the opportunity to offer formal, oral testimony.

Sincerely,



Sheila F. Davies, Ph.D.
Mayor

C: Honorable Richard Burr, U.S, Senate
Honorable Thom Tillis, U.S. Senate
Honorable Walter Jones, U.S. House of Representatives
Honorable Don Kingston, Mayor, Town of Duck
Honorable Tom Bennett, Mayor, Town of Southern Shores
Honorable Gary Perry, Mayor, Town of Kitty Hawk
Honorable Ben Cahoon, Mayor, Town of Nags Head
Honorable Bobby Owens, Mayor, Town of Manteo
Honorable Bob Woodard, Chairman, Dare County Board of Commissioners
Kill Devil Hills Board of Commissioners
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