

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 30, 2025

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Doug Burgum
Secretary of the Interior
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President and Secretary Burgum:

We write to express our strongest opposition to any effort to open new offshore oil and gas leasing in federal waters off the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, in the Arctic Ocean and northern Bering Sea off of Alaska, and in the Eastern Gulf.¹ This is a matter of national consequence for coastal communities across the country, regardless of political affiliation. It puts our economies, national security, and our most vulnerable ecosystems at severe risk. These reported proposals would reverse long-standing protections that shield sensitive coastal waters from new drilling, including withdrawals under the *Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act*, statutory moratoria, and agency restrictions.

Expanded oil and gas leasing poses risks to the health and livelihoods of our constituents, jeopardizes our tourism, fishing, and recreation economies, and threatens the marine life that inhabits our coastlines. Many of these communities are already reeling from compounded disasters: hurricanes, sea-level rise, storm surge, and the lingering legacy of oil-spill disasters. Since 1980, hurricanes alone have generated well over \$1.5 trillion in damage in the United States.² Expanding offshore leasing increases the likelihood that future storms, oil spills, or other disasters will impose even greater burdens on front-line coastal communities.

In addition to storms, the threat of oil spills remains real and costly. For example, the U.S. Coast Guard reported a spill of more than 30,000 gallons of “oily-watery mixture” off Louisiana’s coast earlier this year.³ Oil spill damage threatens not just the environment, but the value of coastal homes, the health of tourism economies, and the resilience of coastal infrastructure. A single catastrophic spill could cost taxpayers, states, and local communities tens of billions of dollars in cleanup costs, lost revenue, and degraded ecosystems. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) already responds to over 150 oil and chemical spills in U.S. waters every year.⁴ Under the administration’s proposed plan, every part of the United States’ coastline would be at risk of disaster.

¹ Houston Chronicle, [Exclusive: Leaked documents detail Trump’s plans to open East and West coasts to offshore oil drilling.](#) Oct. 22, 2025.

² NOAA NCEI, [Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters \(U.S. summary\)](#). Cumulative costs and deaths by hazard type since 1980. Accessed Oct. 2025.

³ USCG, [“UPDATE 4: Coast Guard federalizes pollution response efforts...”](#) Press Release, May 1, 2025

⁴ NOAA Office of Response and Restoration, Oil and Chemical Spills. Accessed Oct. 2025.

These risks are magnified by the administration’s dismantling of NOAA and its oil spill prevention and response programs. Nearly 30 percent of NOAA’s Office of Response and Restoration Emergency Response Division staff—the team that addresses oil spills—were already laid off or took early retirement as part of the administration’s ongoing reductions in force.⁵ The administration’s proposed fiscal year 2026 budget would cut in half funding for the oil spill program and the Emergency Response Division.⁶

Under the administration’s reported plans, harmful seismic testing could take place across every coast. NOAA Fisheries recently concluded that oil and gas activities like seismic exploration in the Gulf of Mexico could drive the endangered Rice’s whale—of which only a few dozen individuals remain—to extinction.⁷ Seismic testing for oil and gas disrupts communication, navigation, and breeding among whales, fish, and other marine species, inflicting irreversible harm on ocean ecosystems.

The administration’s reported plans would also open up oil and gas leasing in areas the Department of Defense (DOD) has previously stated would be problematic for military readiness. Leaked documents report that the administration will conduct leasing in parts of the Eastern Gulf, which includes irreplaceable military training and testing opportunities and assets.⁸ The DOD has similarly labeled portions of the Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic Planning Areas “not compatible with oil and gas activities and infrastructure.”⁹

The United States already leads the world in oil and gas production. The industry currently holds more than 2,000 offshore leases covering over 12 million acres of federal waters—yet fewer than 500 of those leases are actively producing oil and gas.¹⁰ There is no justification for opening vast swaths of our oceans to leasing when existing leases remain largely unused, while imposing mounting environmental and economic costs on coastal communities.

While the administration prepares to expand offshore drilling, it is simultaneously undermining offshore wind and clean energy development, thereby reducing our ability to expand energy supplies and build resilient coastal economies. On January 20, 2025, the President issued a memorandum withdrawing all areas of the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) from offshore wind leasing, pending review.¹¹ On July 30, 2025, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) rescinded all designated Wind Energy Areas (WEAs).¹² The Department of the Interior has issued directives curbing so-called “preferential treatment” for wind and solar, and the U.S. Department of Transportation withdrew \$679 million in offshore-wind-related port infrastructure

⁵ CBS News, “Oil Spill off Louisiana’s Gulf Coast raises alarm as DOGE cuts may threaten response efforts,” May 2, 2025.

⁶ NOAA estimates spending \$45,000 on Coastal Science, Assessment, Response and Restoration in FY2026, a 52 percent decrease from the \$94,119 appropriated for the program in FY2024. See NOAA, [Budget Estimates Fiscal Year 2026](#), June 30, 2025.

⁷ NOAA Fisheries, [Gulf of America Oil and Gas Biological Opinion](#), May 15, 2025

⁸ Department of Defense, [Preserving Military Readiness in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico](#), January 29, 2018.

⁹ Department of Defense, [DoD Mission Compatibility Planning Assessment: BOEM 2017-2022 Outer Continental Shelf \(OCS\) Oil and Gas Leasing Draft Proposed Program](#), October 30, 2015.

¹⁰ DOI, [Interior Announces Eleventh National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program](#), April 18, 2025

¹¹ The White House, [“Temporary Withdrawal of All Areas on the Outer Continental Shelf from Offshore Wind Leasing...”](#) Presidential Memorandum, Jan. 20, 2025.

¹² BOEM, [“Wind Energy Areas \(WEAs\)”](#) Accessed Oct. 2025.

funding.^{13, 14} These actions raise electricity costs for families, make our coastlines less safe, and our communities more vulnerable.

We therefore urge your administration to take the following actions to reverse course immediately:

1. Halt any steps toward new offshore oil and gas leasing in the Atlantic, Pacific, off the coast the Arctic and Bering Sea coasts of Alaska, and the Eastern Gulf;
2. Limit offshore drilling, consistent with previous statutory and agency protections;
3. Prioritize coastal resilience, including expanded storm-surge and flood protection, restoration of wetlands and sand dunes, and early-warning systems, so that communities in Florida, Georgia, the Carolinas, New Jersey, Alaska, and beyond are better protected; and
4. Restore a credible pathway for offshore wind and other clean-energy projects by rescinding the OCS wind-leasing withdrawal and rescinded WEAs, enabling science-based projects that support jobs and coastal economies.^{15, 16}

Protecting our waters from offshore drilling is broadly supported by the American public. Nearly two-thirds of registered voters oppose new offshore drilling, and hundreds of municipalities along the Atlantic, Pacific, the eastern Gulf, and these regions of Alaska have passed formal resolutions against its expansion.^{17, 18, 19} These communities have made clear that safeguarding their coastal economies, fisheries, and way of life must take precedence over short-term fossil fuel interests. Our coastal communities, fishermen, small business owners, Tribal Nations, tourism operators, and families cannot be sacrificed in the name of short-term drilling booms. Opening new offshore lease areas while cancelling clean energy progress is potentially illegal, a failure of leadership, and a dereliction of the public trust.

We look forward to your prompt response detailing what specific steps the Administration will take to halt this course of action and recommit to safeguarding our nation's shores, economy, and shared future.

Sincerely,

¹³ DOI, Secretarial Order No. 3437, "[Ending Preferential Treatment for Unreliable Foreign Energy Sources.](#)" July 29, 2025.

¹⁴ DOT, "[Biden-Harris Administration Withdraws \\$679 Million in Port Infrastructure Grants.](#)" Aug. 29, 2025.

¹⁵ The White House, "[Temporary Withdrawal of All Areas on the Outer Continental Shelf from Offshore Wind Leasing...](#)" Presidential Memorandum, Jan. 20, 2025.

¹⁶ BOEM, "[Wind Energy Areas \(WEAs\)](#)" Accessed Oct. 2025.

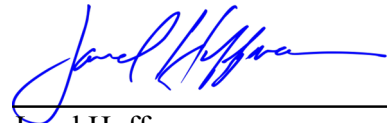
¹⁷ Ipsos, "[Oceana Offshore Drilling Survey](#)," July 2024

¹⁸ Oceana, "[Pacific Drilling](#)"

¹⁹ Kawerak, "[Kawerak, Association of Village Council Presidents, and Bering Sea Elders Group Appreciate Protections for Their Waters from Oil and Gas Leasing](#)," January 6, 2025



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



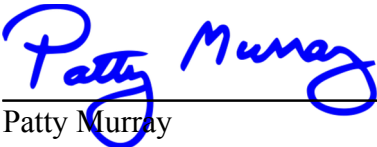
Jared Huffman
Member of Congress
Ranking Member, House
Natural Resources Committee



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



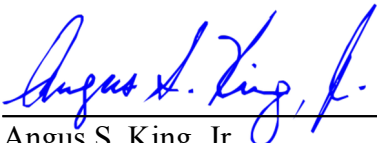
Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



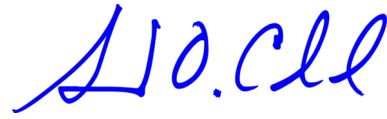
Patty Murray
United States Senator



Nancy Pelosi
Member of Congress



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



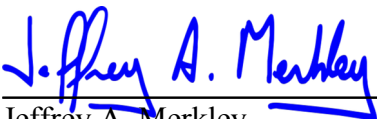
Salud Carbajal
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Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



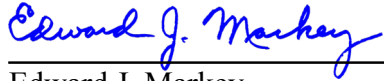
Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



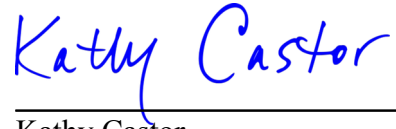
Jeffrey A. Merkley
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Dan Goldman
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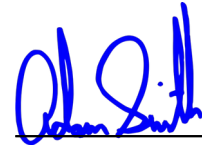
Edward J. Markey
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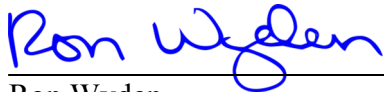
Kathy Castor
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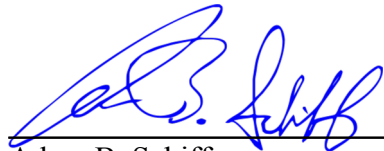
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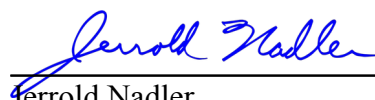
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



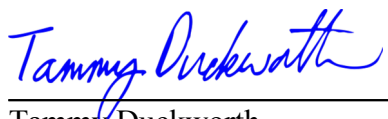
Jim Himes
Member of Congress



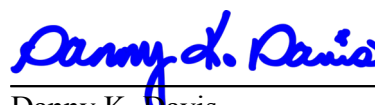
Jack Reed
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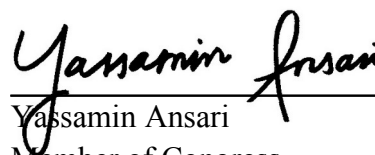
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Rashida Tlaib
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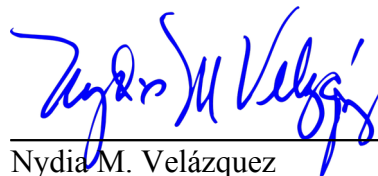
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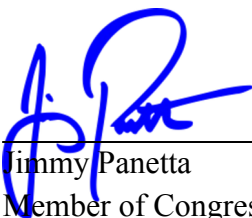
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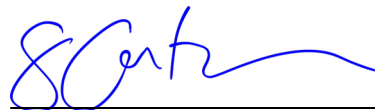
Maxine Dexter
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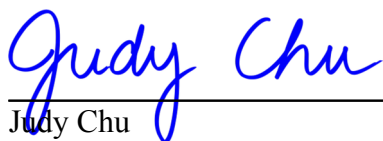
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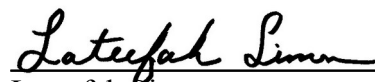
Jimmy Panetta
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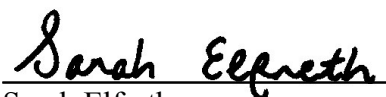
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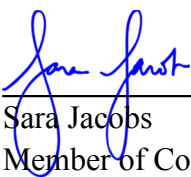
Lateefah Simon
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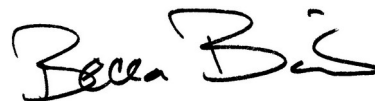
Sarah Elfreth
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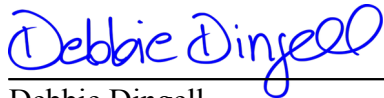
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Wesley Bell
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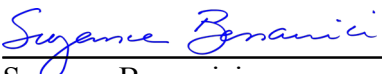
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Suzanne Bonamici
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Joe Neguse
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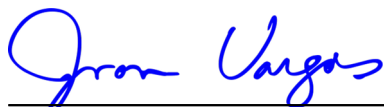
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Diana DeGette
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Juan Vargas
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Mary Gay Scanlon
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Robert Garcia
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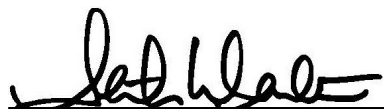
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Ted W. Lieu
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Andrea Salinas
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Seth Moulton
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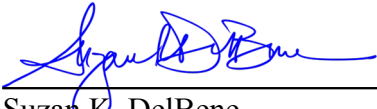
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Gabe Amo
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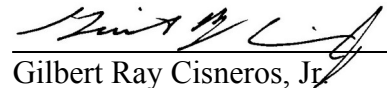
Suzan K. DelBene
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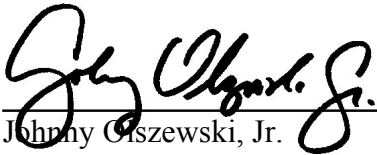
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Chellie Pingree
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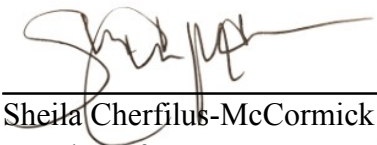
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Luz M. Rivas
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Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
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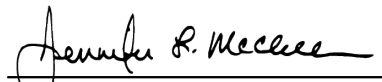
Julia Brownley
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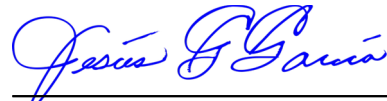
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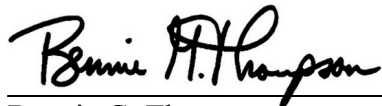
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Jennifer L. McClellan
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Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



Bennie G. Thompson
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Rick Larsen
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Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



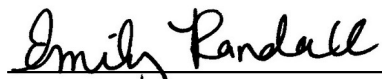
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Member of Congress



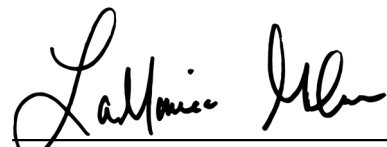
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Sarah McBride
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Emily Randall
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LaMonica McIver
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Steve Cohen
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