



Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Mark Belton, Secretary
Joanne Throwe, Deputy Secretary

December 20, 2018

Ms. Donna Wieting
Director, Fisheries Office of Protected Resources
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1315 East-West Highway
13th Floor
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Ms. Kelly Hammerle
National Program Manager
U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
45600 Woodland Road
Mailstop WAM-LD
Sterling, VA 20166

Dear Ms. Wieting and Ms. Hammerle:

On behalf of Governor Larry Hogan, I wanted to reiterate the State of Maryland's steadfast opposition to the ongoing pursuit of offshore oil and gas exploration, leasing, development and production in the Atlantic Ocean. We are deeply concerned about the individual and cumulative impacts to marine species and habitats that may result from geological and geophysical surveys in the Atlantic and the recent issuance of incidental harassment authorizations by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

We are not alone in this opposition. Recently, all five mid-Atlantic governors have made clear, both separately and through our partnership on the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean that offshore drilling threatens our coastal economy and environment. The Maryland maritime transportation sector itself contributes \$3.9 billion to the U.S. economy and pays \$1.87 billion in wages in Maryland. The value of Maryland's commercial fisheries landings in 2016 was \$94.8 million. We cannot afford to jeopardize the natural resources and economies of Maryland or the mid-Atlantic region.

We urge you to heed the concerns and preferences expressed by many Marylanders and our region that clearly state that offshore oil and gas development poses far greater risk than we are willing to assume in the backyard of our nation's most iconic natural places, the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays. As stated on numerous occasions, the State of Maryland believes that offshore oil and gas development and exploration are not in the best interest of our citizens, communities, environment or industry. Exposing any one of these groups to the environmental risk posed by offshore oil and gas development does not make sense from any perspective or under any scenario.

Sincerely,

Mark Belton
Secretary

cc: Ben Grumbles, Secretary, Maryland Department of the Environment
Mary Beth Tung, Ph.D., Esq, Director, Maryland Energy Administration
Joanne Throwe, Deputy Secretary, Maryland Department of Natural Resources
William Anderson, Assistant Secretary, Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Matt Fleming, Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Catherine McCall, Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Tawes State Office Building – 580 Taylor Avenue – Annapolis, Maryland 21401
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