



June 13, 2018

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232 U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Democratic Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-204 U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rob Bishop  
Chairman  
House Committee on Natural Resources  
123 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Raúl Grijalva  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Natural Resources  
1511 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan, Leader Pelosi, Chairman Bishop, and Ranking Member Grijalva:

As governors of five states that oppose offshore drilling on the Atlantic Coast, we urge you to oppose the “Enhancing State Management of Federal Lands and Waters” Act. Despite its name, this bill does not enhance state management of offshore waters, it eliminates it. We are a coalition of leaders who call on Congress to reject this legislation that not only disregards the wishes of the citizens of our states, but also, in unprecedented fashion, improperly imposes a significant and undue burden on states aiming to preserve the economies and environments that depend on their shorelines.

It could not be more clear that the citizens of our states oppose the U.S. Department of Interior’s Proposed Plan to open 98% of our nation’s coastal waters to offshore oil and gas drilling. Virtually every state along the Atlantic and Pacific coasts has opposed this strategy and all of the undersigned governors have registered their objections with the Interior Department. In addition, a bipartisan group of Representatives and Senators from our states have stood united with us in their opposition to this proposal. Finally, many of our state legislatures and local governments have enacted statutes or ordinances, respectively, to prevent or oppose offshore drilling.

Offshore drilling poses a substantial threat to the ecologically significant areas along our coasts and the tourism industry on which our local and statewide economies depend. Each of our states’ coastlines support tens of thousands of jobs and generate tens of billions of dollars into our economies. Those jobs and dollars would be acutely threatened by the Interior Department’s reckless proposal.

Unfortunately, the Enhancing State Management of Federal Lands and Waters Act severely punishes those states that are responsive to constituents who strongly object to offshore drilling

and who aim to protect our ecologically and economically valuable coasts. Under the guise of providing an option to states, this legislation would impose a hefty cost on states that choose to exercise jurisdiction over their shorelines. Though a legislative proposal that simply encouraged offshore drilling would be misguided, one that harshly rebukes states for acting within their rights to appropriately respond to the needs of their economies and citizens is truly objectionable.

No cost should be imposed on a state that wishes to prevent irreparable damage to its coasts, yet this legislation anticipates imposing a price that would be many times the Interior Department's own valuation of an offshore lease area. Such an approach aims solely to penalize states that oppose offshore oil and gas drilling, while risking the nation's thriving and ever-expanding tourism industry. Rather than foster collaboration with states, this legislation needlessly pits the federal government against the states and their citizens.

Our constituents have been clear about the need to protect our shorelines: our environment, our jobs, and our economies depend on it. We ask that Congress recognize and respect the rights of states to protect our waters without being held hostage by the combined effects of the Interior Department's dangerous proposal and this misguided legislation.

Sincerely,



Philip D. Murphy  
Governor

State of New Jersey

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Governor Roy Cooper  
State of North Carolina



Governor Daniel P. Malloy  
State of Connecticut



Governor Gina Raimondo  
State of Rhode Island



Governor Ralph Northam  
State of Virginia