

October 3, 2022

Amanda Lefton, Director  
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240

CC:

Secretary Deb Haaland  
President Joe Biden  
Tommy Beaudreau  
Kelly Hammerle

Re: No new leases in the Five Year Program

Dear Director Lefton:

This letter is submitted on behalf of 193 organizations – including 48 in the Gulf of Mexico and Alaska – urgently calling for no new leases in the Five Year Program for offshore drilling. The undersigned span the U.S. and represent myriad people and interests, including coastal communities and Indigenous peoples; fishermen, farmers, and other food producers; environmental protection and food safety; religion and spiritualism; and science and academia. Offshore drilling is harming our communities, wreaking havoc on the environment, and contributing to the “code red” crisis of global climate change.

The proposal of 95+ million acres for more oil and gas development turns its back on the people who have been living with the effects of the industry for generations. It locks in this pain for generations more. It overlooks the ongoing, unprecedented, and soon irreversible damage from fossil fuels, only to pad the pockets of the industry under the guise of “energy security.” It undermines the broken promise of no new leases. **We maintain our unified demand despite Congress’s recent passage of the Inflation Reduction Act, which contains distressing language concerning offshore drilling. These provisions do not reflect public sentiment or the will of the people, who predominantly oppose continued offshore drilling.**

Of paramount concern is the perpetuation of the Central and Western Gulf of Mexico and Alaska’s Cook Inlet as the nation’s sacrificial zones to offshore drilling. Insultingly, the proposal concludes that cumulative impacts of eleven additional sales will be felt less in these areas due to the very fact that they are already sacrificial zones replete with industrial development. This is akin to telling a cancer patient they do not need treatment, because they are already sick. Moreover, the proposed sale in Lower Cook Inlet is nothing but counterintuitive, as it closely parallels Lease Sale 258 in the former Five Year Program, which your department canceled due to lack of industry interest.

Catastrophic oil spills are one of the many inevitable consequences of offshore drilling, and the communities closest to spills disproportionately suffer. One of the largest spills in U.S. history, Taylor Oil Spill started in 2004 after Hurricane Ivan. It is only now being contained after 15 years of polluting the Gulf with up to 700 gallons of oil and 0.7 tons of methane *daily*. British Petroleum’s 2010 Deepwater Horizon disaster killed eleven workers and spilled more than 210 million gallons of oil and gas into the Gulf. Increases in rare and unusual illnesses and cancers in children and adults, linked with oil-dispersant exposures, have claimed even more lives from the BP oil disaster. In 1989, the Exxon Valdez oil tanker spilled 11 million gallons into Alaska’s waters harming 1,300+ miles of shoreline, killing hundreds of thousands of wildlife, and still causing at least 4 species to remain in imperiled status. The ecological devastation wrought by spills continues to impact fishing communities such as Pointe à la Hache, a primarily African-American fishing village in Louisiana, and Alaska Native communities throughout Cordova, Chenega, Tatitlek, Port Graham, and Nanwalek, who in the face of offshore drilling have reported lower harvests and reduced diversity of species.

When combined with sea level rise and more extreme storms, offshore drilling also places coastal communities at the frontlines of the climate crisis. Communities and Tribes in the area are already climate migrants, having been displaced due to fossil fuels and climate change.

Extractivism perpetuates the ethnocide of Indigenous People that began hundreds of years ago with the first colonists. The history and identity of Indigenous Peoples are tied to their territory through memories, stories, and sacred and cultural sites. Environmental and climate impacts not only affect people's means of sustenance; they also affect people's relationship with their territory and their ability to continue to live as Indigenous People and maintain their own identity and customs. Not only are physical homes and lives being lost, but their entire identity, which is tied into the land, continues to be targeted for erasure. Offshore drilling violates and infringes on the rights of Indigenous People and the federal government must ensure that it has free, prior, and informed consent - meaning consent that is given freely, by people fully informed of the consequences - before development can proceed.

Refineries, storage facilities, toxic waste sites, pipelines, and oil trains are poisoning neighborhoods. Children suffer debilitating asthma, loved ones die painful deaths, land is sinking, coastlines are eroding, and the seas are rising from relentless fossil fuel development. Enough is enough. The Earth is sacred and must be protected. We must reverse course with swift and meaningful action, starting with no new leases in the final Five Year Program, and instead investing resources toward clean, justly-sourced renewable energy. People and ecosystems are enduring tremendous, unnecessary harm while the fossil fuel industry grows wealthier. These injustices must be addressed by issuing a final Five Year Program with no new leases.

Thank you,

1000 Grandmothers for Future Generations  
307 Bryn Mawr Ave  
350 Bay Area Action  
350 Conejo / San Fernando Valley  
350 Hawaii  
350 Humboldt  
350 New Orleans  
350 Pensacola  
350.org  
350Juneau  
350Kishwaukee  
5 Gyres Institute  
A Beautiful Future Climate Healing Chorus  
Action Center on Race & the Economy  
AFGE Local 704  
Alabama Interfaith Power & Light  
Alaska Marine Conservation Council  
Alliance for Affordable Energy  
American Friends Service Committee  
Animals Are Sentient Beings Inc  
Another Gulf Is Possible Collaborative  
Assateague Coastal Trust

Association of Young Americans  
Azul  
Ban SUP (Single Use Plastics)  
Bayou City Waterkeeper  
Bergen County Green Party  
Berks Gas Truth  
Better Path Coalition  
Beyond Plastics  
Black Warrior Riverkeeper  
Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League  
Bold Alliance  
Boston Catholic Climate Movement  
Bronx Climate Justice North  
Catalyst Miami  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Center for Environmental Health  
Central Jersey Coalition Against Endless War  
Change Begins With ME (Indivisible)  
Change the Chamber  
Change the Chamber\*Lobby for Climate  
Chapel Hill Organization for Clean Energy  
Chesapeake Climate Action Network  
Chispa LCV  
Chispa Texas  
CLEO Institute  
Climate and Community Project  
Climate Crisis Policy  
Coalition to Protect New York  
Common Ground Relief  
Cook Inletkeeper  
Creation Justice Ministries  
Dayenu: A Jewish Call to Climate Action  
Democratic Socialists of America - Knoxville, TN  
Divest Oregon: Reinvest in a Fossil Free Future  
Don't Waste Arizona  
Eco-Justice Collaborative  
Elders Climate Action  
Elected Officials to Protect America  
Endangered Species Coalition  
Environmental Defense Center  
Extinction Rebellion San Francisco Bay Area  
Extinction Rebellion, New Orleans  
Fairbanks Climate Action Coalition  
Family Farm Defenders

Food & Water Watch  
Fox Valley Citizens for Peace & Justice  
FracTracker Alliance  
FreshWater Accountability Project  
Fridays For Future Jaffrey, NH  
Fridays for Future U.S.  
Friends of the Earth U.S.  
GASP  
Greater New Orleans Interfaith Climate Coalition  
Greening Greenfield  
Greenpeace USA  
Healthy Gulf  
Healthy Ocean Coalition  
Hispanic Access Foundation  
Honor the Earth  
Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship's Climate Action Campaign  
Indian Point Safe Energy Coalition  
Indigenous Climate Action  
Indigenous Lifeways  
Indivisible Resistance San Diego  
Indivisible Ventura  
Inland Ocean Coalition  
Interfaith Oceans  
International Marine Mammal Project of Earth Island Institute  
Iowa CCI  
Kachemak Bay Conservation Society  
Kentucky interfaith power and light  
Lexington Climate Action Network  
Long Beach Alliance for Clean Energy  
Louisiana Bucket Brigade  
Lower Ninth Ward Neighborhood Association  
Lower Ninth Ward Street Library  
Marine Conservation Institute  
Milwaukee Riverkeeper  
Ministry for Earth New Orleans  
Mission Blue  
Mothers Out Front California  
Movement Rights  
Movement Training Network  
MoveOn.org Hoboken  
Mystic Aquarium  
Native Movement  
Native Organizers Alliance  
Nature Coast Conservation, Inc

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Nicargua Center for Community Action  
North Bronx Racial Justice  
Nuclear Information and Resource Service  
NY4WHALES  
Occupy Bergen County  
Ocean Alliance  
Ocean Conservation Research  
Oceanic Preservation Society  
Oil and Gas Action Network  
Omega and Brenda Wilson  
Operation HomeCare, Inc.  
Our Revolution Michigan  
Our Revolution Ohio  
PA Jewish Earth Alliance  
Peace Action WI  
People for a Healthy Environment  
People's Climate Movement-Capital Region  
Personal support of community letter  
Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania  
Plastic Pollution Coalition  
Port Arthur Community Action Network  
Progress Florida  
Progressive Democrats of America  
Protect All Children's Environment  
PSR-Arizona Chapter  
Putnam Progressives  
Resist the Pipeline  
Resource Renewal Institute  
Revolving Door Project  
Rio Mapacho Waterkeeper  
RISE St. James  
san antonio bay estuarine waterkeeper  
Schools for Climate Action  
SEED of SW NM  
Seven Circles Foundation  
Sierra Club Alaska  
Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, New York  
SoCal 350 Climate Action  
Society of Native Nations  
Solar Wind Works  
SOMA Action  
South Asian Fund For Education Scholarship and Training Inc  
Southeast Alaska Conservation Council  
SouthWings

Stand.earth  
Stop the Algonquin Pipeline Expansion (SAPE)  
Sunflower Alliance  
Surfrider Foundation  
Susitna River Coalition  
Sustainable Medina County  
Taproot Earth  
Terra Advocati  
Texas Campaign for the Environment  
The ALERT Project  
The Consortia  
The Enviro Show  
The Farmworker Association of Florida  
The Last Plastic Straw  
The People's Justice Council  
The Rachel Carson Council  
Three Rivers Waterkeeper  
Tidelines Institute  
Turtle Island Restoration Network  
Turtle Island Restoration Network  
Unitarian Universalist Advocacy Network of Illinois  
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice  
Unite North Metro Denver  
UU FaithAction NJ  
Wall of Women  
Waterkeepers Chesapeake  
Waterspirit  
Waterway Advocates  
Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)  
Yarra Riverkeeper