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Coalition to Save Hempstead Harbor

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SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO BAN SEISMIC BLASTING AND OIL AND GAS DRILLING OFF THE ATLANTIC COAST

In 2018, the Trump Administration announced a Draft Proposed Program (DPP) that considers nearly the entire US Outer Continental Shelf for potential oil and gas lease sales. According to a Department of Interior press release (see <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/secretary-zinke-announces-plan-unleashing-americas-offshore-oil-and-gas-potential>), the DPP includes 47 potential lease sales in 25 of the 26 planning areas (9 in the Atlantic region), representing the largest number of lease sales ever proposed for the National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program's five-year lease schedule. This program reverses the Obama Administration's 2016 ban of new offshore oil and gas drilling in millions of acres federally owned land in the Arctic and Atlantic Ocean (see https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2016/12/20/president-obama-expected-to-ban-oil-drilling-in-large-areas-of-atlantic-and-arctic-oceans/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.9eb2c7ef6055).

There are currently no leases off the Atlantic coast and the prospect of oil and gas exploration raises alarms for states all along the eastern seaboard because of the environmental threats posed by seismic blasting and potential oil spills that could wreak havoc on our NY/Long Island shoreline and economy (see <https://www.wliw.org/programs/long-island-business-report/offshore-oil-xd3g0d/>). In response, NYS Governor Cuomo and governors of nine other states joined together to express their opposition to the federal government against seismic airgun surveys and oil and gas drilling off the Atlantic coast (see <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-and-nine-other-governors-issue-letter-federal-government-opposing-seismic-airgun>).

State legislative initiatives are also taking aim against oil and exploration and drilling off the Atlantic coast by banning such efforts along with related infrastructure in state waters. The NYS Senate and Assembly have both passed bills (S2316 and A2572) that have bipartisan support to ban the Trump administration's efforts to allow offshore drilling.

Unfortunately, state jurisdiction extends only three miles off shore. Beyond that limit, federal law prevails, and oil and gas producers could proceed and bring their product ashore as long as there is even one state along the Atlantic coast that doesn't legislate a ban. Already federal permits to allow underwater oil and gas exploration by way of seismic airgun testing have been approved and are soon to be issued.

Seismic testing is aptly named as the blasts are as loud as dynamite and fired every 10 seconds for weeks, sometimes months. The noise is known to disrupt the vital behaviors of marine life, such as finding food, selecting mates, and avoiding predators, as well as causing injury and death. The activity displaces fish, and puts commercial fisheries at risk (see <https://oceana.org/our-work/climate-energy/seismic-airgun-blasting/overview>).

The prospective assault to marine life in the service of promoting more fossil fuel use, despite global signs of climate catastrophe, is unconscionable. The NYS bills (and similar ones in NJ, DE, MD, FL, CA) are a step back from the brink, though they have no effect beyond state waters. It is critically important that every NY public official, from members of Congress to the governor as well as state and county representatives, voice their opposition to the proposed federal program that would allow offshore oil and gas drilling to proceed.

To support Governor Cuomo's state ban, go to:

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/content/sign-petition-say-no-offshore-drilling-new-yorks-coast?nysWebRef=Govcard>

Contact:

Senator Charles Schumer at

<https://www.schumer.senate.gov/contact/email-chuck>

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand at

<https://www.gillibrand.senate.gov/contact/email-me>

Representative Kathleen Rice at

<https://kathleenrice.house.gov/contact/>

Representative Tom Suozzi at

<https://suozzi.house.gov/contact>

Representative Peter King at

<https://peteking.house.gov/contact>

Representative Lee Zeldin at

<https://zeldin.house.gov/contact>