

*Office of the Governor
State of North Carolina*

*Roy Cooper
Governor*



*20301 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, N.C. 27699-0301*

January 10, 2018

The Hon. Ryan Zinke, Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke:

I was surprised last week to learn of your Department's proposal to open the Atlantic waters off North Carolina and other states to the prospect of offshore oil drilling. I was even more surprised this week to see your decision to remove Florida from that list of states prior to a public comment period.

Just as you acknowledge in removing Florida, offshore drilling threatens tourism, which is a vital economic driver. The same holds true for North Carolina.

Coastal tourism generates \$3 billion annually in North Carolina and supports more than 30,000 jobs in the eastern part of the state. Commercial fishing brings in another \$95 million every year. In addition, North Carolina has over 300 miles of coastline, 2.3 million acres of estuarine waters, and over 10,000 miles of estuarine shoreline. All of these contribute to a robust national economy.

I have told your Department before and will share again in formal comments, offshore drilling threatens North Carolina's coastal economy and environment, yet offers our state little economic benefit.

We cannot afford to endanger our ecologically sensitive coastlines or the natural resources that are the foundation of our state's tourism industry and coastal economy.

My staff has already been in touch with your office to request a phone call or meeting on this topic, and I reiterate that request now. I look forward to speaking with you to share just how damaging your proposal would be to North Carolina and our nation's coastlines.

Very truly yours,


Roy Cooper