



North Carolina



South Carolina

June 15, 2025

Ms. Kelly Hammerle
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
45600 Woodland Road
Sterling, VA 20166-9216

RE: Request for Information (RFI) and Comments on the Preparation of the 11th
National Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Leasing Program

Dear Ms. Hammerle,

We write on behalf of our states of North Carolina and South Carolina in response to the Request for Information and Comments on the Preparation of the 11th National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program (Docket no. BOEM-2025-0015)¹ to urge you to maintain the existing moratorium on offshore oil and gas exploration, development, and production off our coasts.

On September 8, 2020, President Trump issued a memorandum protecting the waters off the coast of South Carolina from leasing disposition until June 30, 2032.² On September 25, 2020, President Trump issued a second memorandum protecting the waters off the coast of North Carolina from leasing disposition until June 30, 2032.³ These decisions to protect the Carolina coast from offshore oil and gas exploration, development, and production were responsive to the significant bipartisan concerns of business leaders, residents, and local and state elected officials about the risks that these activities pose to the economy and environment of our states. We ask that in the 11th National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program, BOEM uphold President Trump's commitment to protect the vital asset that is our coastal zones by removing North and South Carolina's outer continental shelf lands from consideration in the program.

¹ <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/04/30/2025-07479/request-for-information-and-comments-on-the-preparation-of-the-11th-national-outer-continental-shelf>

² <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/presidential-actions/memorandum-withdrawal-certain-areas-united-states-outer-continental-shelf-leasing-disposition/>

³ <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/presidential-actions/presidential-determination-withdrawal-certain-areas-united-states-outer-continental-shelf-leasing-disposition/>

North and South Carolina have a combined 513 miles of ocean beaches and 6,251 miles of coastline.⁴ These coastal zones are home to more than 2,740,500 people and include numerous National Wildlife Refuges such as Pea Island, Alligator River, Mackay Island, Pocosin Lakes, and Currituck in North Carolina, and Cape Romain, Ernest F. Hollings, ACE Basin, Santee, and Waccamaw in South Carolina.

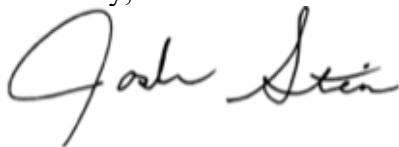
In 2021 alone, North and South Carolina's coastal economy contributed \$9.6 billion to the GDP, supported more than 125,000 jobs and provided \$3.8 billion in wages, led by robust tourism and recreation, shipbuilding, fishing, and marine transportation industries.⁵ These industries, which are the economic lifeblood of our coastal communities, are also highly vulnerable to disruption from offshore oil and gas exploration, development, and production.

Our coasts are also home to critical military installations that are vital to national security. Offshore oil and gas infrastructure and activities, including seismic testing, can interfere with these operations, weakening our national defense.

Because of the significant risks associated with offshore oil and gas exploration, development and production off the Carolina coasts, every North Carolina and South Carolina coastal municipality has passed a resolution opposing offshore drilling and seismic testing. This position has been reaffirmed by other municipalities and counties, as well as state legislators and members of our Congressional delegations from both parties.

We ask you to respect the wishes of our states and our coastal communities and re-affirm President Trump's decision to protect our coastlines and the industries they support. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this critical issue.

Sincerely,



Josh Stein
Governor of North Carolina



Henry Dargan McMaster
Governor of South Carolina

⁴ <https://coast.noaa.gov/states/north-carolina.html> and <https://coast.noaa.gov/states/south-carolina.html>
<https://www.deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/coastal-management/coastal-management-oceanfront-shorelines/beach-inlet-management-plan> and <https://governor.sc.gov/sc-floodwater-commission-artificial-reef-systems-task-force>.

⁵ <https://coast.noaa.gov/data/digitalcoast/pdf/marine-economy-north-carolina.pdf>
<https://coast.noaa.gov/data/digitalcoast/pdf/marine-economy-south-carolina.pdf>