

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 25, 2020

Dr. Walter Cruickshank
Acting Director, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Dr. Cruickshank:

We write to express our concern with plans to explore for offshore oil and gas in the Atlantic Ocean with harmful seismic airgun blasting. As you know, we have the honor and privilege of representing districts in coastal states that rely directly on healthy ocean resources and pristine coastlines. Therefore, we have a vested interest in any activities that could potentially impact our coastal communities, economies, and ecosystems. Seismic airgun blasting in search of oil has lasting implications for the future of Atlantic states' ocean-dependent businesses and coastal way of life.

Creating one of the loudest manmade sounds in the ocean, noise from seismic airguns can disturb, injure, and even kill animals across the entire marine ecosystem. Exposing our abundant and lucrative ocean resources to dangerous blasting is simply not worth the risk. Proposed oil exploration activities threaten Atlantic marine resources that support over 1.5 million jobs and generate nearly \$108 billion in GDP each year, mainly through tourism, fishing, and recreation. Any potential benefits of oil exploration are far outweighed by the stable, recurring revenue and jobs our communities generate from healthy oceans.

Given our concerns with proposed seismic airgun blasting in the Atlantic, and given BOEM's plans to issue geological and geophysical permits to allow such activity, please provide answers to the following questions:

1. Has BOEM already issued seismic permits for seismic surveys in the Atlantic Ocean?
2. If so, can you share the seismic permits?
3. If not, will BOEM be making the seismic permits publicly available, upon the date of issuance? If so, where?
4. Will BOEM inform these Congressional offices when seismic permits for oil and gas surveys in the Atlantic Ocean are issued?
5. Will BOEM require 30-days' notice from permit holders before they begin seismic survey activities?

a. NOTE: The attached declaration states at paragraph 9: "If, on or after March 1, BOEM ultimately issues any permit for G&G activities on the Atlantic OCS, BOEM will require as a condition of approval that the permittee submit a notice to BOEM announcing when the permittee plans to initiate survey activities. The permittee must submit the notice at least 30 days prior to conducting any activities under the permit."

6. If notice will be required, will BOEM share the notice from permit holders publicly upon receipt or otherwise notify these Congressional offices and the public on the date when such notice is received from the permit holder?

On behalf of communities up and down the Atlantic coast, we must know more about this unfolding process. Thank you for your personal attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Joe Cunningham
Member of Congress



Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress