

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

GOVERNOR PHIL MURPHY

COALITION OF COASTAL GOVERNORS DEMANDS CONGRESS REJECT ENHANCING STATE MANAGEMENT OF FEDERAL LANDS AND WATERS ACT LEGISLATION

TRENTON – A coalition of governors from New Jersey, Connecticut, North Carolina, Rhode Island and Virginia, today sent a letter to Congress opposing the “Enhancing State Management of Federal Lands and Waters” Act, specifically calling on congressional leaders to reject the legislation, which imposes an undue burden on states aiming to preserve the economies and environments that depend on their shorelines.

“It could not be more clear that the citizens of our states oppose the U.S. Department of Interior’s Proposed Plan to open 98 percent of our nation’s coastal waters to offshore oil and gas drilling. Virtually every state along the Atlantic coast has opposed this strategy and all the undersigned governors have registered their objections with the Interior Department,” said the coalition in their letter. “In addition, a bipartisan group of Representatives and Senators from our states have stood united with us in their opposition to this proposal and many of our state legislatures and local governments have enacted statutes or ordinances, respectively, to prevent or oppose offshore drilling. We ask that Congress recognize and respect the rights of states to protect our waters without being held hostage by the combined effects of the Interior Department’s dangerous proposal and this misguided legislation.”

The letter notes the substantial threat offshore drilling poses to ecologically significant areas along coastal areas and the potential impact on critical state tourism industries. Each state respectively supports tens of thousands of jobs and generates tens of billions of dollars into local and regional economies, jobs and dollars that would be acutely threatened by the Interior Department’s proposal.

“Offshore drilling would cause catastrophic and lasting economic harm to New Jersey’s 130-mile shoreline, which supports a tourism industry worth \$44 billion annually and attracts millions of visitors each year,” **said Governor Phil Murphy**. “We simply cannot allow the Trump Administration’s anti-environmental policies to endanger our coastal communities. For New Jersey, the societal, economic and environmental costs would be detrimental to the overall quality of life for our residents.”

“Long Island Sound is heavily used and highly valued by the 23 million people who live within 50 miles of its shores. The most recent study estimated its economic worth between \$17 and \$30 billion annually, including tourism, transportation, fishing, and recreation,” **said Connecticut Governor Dannel Malloy**. “None of its value comes from oil and gas exploration or production, but all of it may be put at risk from outer continental shelf fossil fuel activities, including the installation and operation of oil and gas pipelines. This backwards legislation is a reprehensible and thinly-veiled attack on the ability of states to protect their communities and their residents, and it puts the financial interests of big oil and gas companies before the safety of families. I am proud to stand with my fellow governors in support of the protection of our coastal waters.”

“North Carolina should not have to pay a ransom to protect our beaches from the dangers of offshore drilling,” **said North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper**. “Our coastal communities generate more than 30,000 jobs and the risk posed by offshore drilling simply isn’t worth it.”

“In Rhode Island, we’re focused on a future in offshore wind power, not offshore drilling,” **said Rhode Island Governor Gina M. Raimondo**. “We’ve all seen the irreparable damage that occurs when offshore drilling goes wrong. I will continue to defend our state against any attempts that threaten our beautiful coastal waters, sensitive marine ecosystems and economy. Any attempt to punish states that are working to protect those valuable resources is intolerable.”

“Offshore drilling is a clear and present threat to Virginia’s economy, our military assets and our natural resources,” **said Virginia Governor Ralph Northam**. “Instead of working to eliminate states’ authority to make our own decisions about our own coastlines, congress and the Trump administration should work with us to develop the

new energy technologies we need to fight climate change and make our country a leader in the global energy economy of the future."

A copy of the coalition's letter to Congress is attached.

[Offshore_Drilling_Letter_.pdf \(/governor/news/news/docs/Offshore_Drilling_Letter_.pdf\)](#)

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Office of Governor PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-6000