

**National Wildlife Federation · Association of Northwest Steelheaders (Oregon) ·
Connecticut Forest & Park Association · Conservation Council for Hawaii ·
Conservation Northwest · Delaware Nature Society ·
Environment Council of Rhode Island · Environmental Advocates of New York ·
Environmental League of Massachusetts · Florida Wildlife Federation ·
Georgia Wildlife Federation · National Aquarium ·
Natural Resources Council of Maine · Nebraska Wildlife Federation ·
New Hampshire Audubon Society · New Jersey Audubon Society ·
New Mexico Wildlife Federation · North Carolina Wildlife Federation ·
Planning and Conservation League · Sociedad Ornitológica Puertorriqueña ·
South Carolina Wildlife Federation · Texas Conservation Alliance ·
Vermont Natural Resources Council · Virgin Islands Conservation Society ·
Virginia Conservation Network**

February 18, 2019

Acting Secretary David Bernhardt
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington DC 20240

Acting Secretary Bernhardt,

America's sprawling coasts range more than 90,000 picturesque miles. Coastal areas are the lifeblood of small and large communities, supporting millions of jobs in the fishing, tourism and recreation sectors. They provide critical habitat for America's iconic marine species — from orcas to manatees and otters to octopi — and support billions of dollars in economic activity. Coastal wetlands and dunes protect communities and shelter thousands of birds and mammals. That's why every single governor from Maine to Florida and from Washington to California opposes offshore drilling off their coasts.

With the Department of the Interior expected to soon issue its new five-year plan for the National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program, we write to you on behalf of the National Wildlife Federation, America's largest and most trusted grassroots conservation organization, and its affiliates from California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Vermont, Virgin Islands, Virginia, and Washington to urge you to reconsider the Department's stated commitment to opening nearly 100 percent of our coasts to oil and gas development.

Republican and Democratic leaders from coastal states have stood united in opposition to the unilateral pursuit of maximum offshore oil and gas drilling. The potential costs to wildlife, our communities, and our way of life are too high. This bipartisan and bicoastal outcry should serve as a wake-up call, and spark a reconsideration of the planning underway now.

The risks are too great to open up more of our coasts to drilling. A spill anywhere along the Atlantic, Pacific or Arctic shorelines would be catastrophic for wildlife and our communities. The effects of the Deepwater Horizon spill in the Gulf of Mexico may have faded from the headlines, but the cleanup

continues to this day and its impacts will last for generations. The Department's recently announced plans to roll back the updated offshore oil and gas safety requirements, put into place after that disaster, heighten the peril.

Our oceans and marine wildlife support billions of dollars of economic activity and sustain tourism, outdoor recreation and fishing in our coastal states. We urge the Administration to throw out its plans and go back to the drawing board, and listen to the governors and residents of coastal states.

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