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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515–4007

June 12, 2018

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary, United States Department of Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke:

We write to you today in opposition of South Carolina's inclusion in the National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program for 2019-2024.

The coast of South Carolina serves as the lifeblood of local communities and an economic engine to the entire state. It is no secret that tourism is a leading industry in South Carolina. Every year, approximately 28.5 million people visit South Carolina to enjoy the beautiful beaches and coastal establishments. These visitors generate about $20 billion in revenue to the South Carolina economy. It would be irresponsible to put these communities at risk.

An oil spill or any other associated disaster off the coast of South Carolina would devastate the state's vibrant coastal economy and have a lasting impact on the entire state. Long-term environmental consequences and health impacts, as result of a spill, would hamper the opportunities for generations to come.

The utilization of alternative energy sources will continue to reduce American's reliance on fossil fuels. Additionally, innovative fossil fuel production methods have caused oil and natural gas prices to drop substantially and there is new increased access to abundant domestic resources. These factors further contribute to drilling off the coast of South Carolina as being an unnecessary risk for tourism reliant coastal economies.

South Carolina residents, businesses, community leaders, and local governments have considered the costs and benefits of offshore oil and gas exploration and production. As a result, every municipality along the South Carolina coast has voted in opposition of offshore drilling. As elected officials it is our duty to support these municipalities' decision and respectfully ask that South Carolina be removed from the National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program for 2019-2024.

Sincerely,

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