

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 28, 2017

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke:

Last month, you called for the development of a new National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program (National Leasing Plan). We write today in support of a new plan that adheres to the seminal law governing offshore energy exploration and development, the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act of 1953. This law declared that, “the Outer Continental Shelf is a vital national resource reserve held by the Federal Government for the public, which should be made available for expeditious and orderly development, subject to environmental safeguarding, in a manner which is consistent with the maintenance of competition and other national needs.” We agree, and we urge you to develop a plan that both protects the environment, and advances our nation’s energy security.

As you begin to develop this new National Leasing Plan, we believe it is imperative to fully consider all OCS lands, including areas not part of the current 2017-2022 Program. Experts have long held that areas off the U.S. coastline hold exponentially more resources than outdated, existing resource estimates suggest. We owe it to the American people to more fully and accurately understand what resources are recoverable in order to make smart decisions in the development of the OCS for the nation.

We recognize that developing the OCS is a long-term enterprise. It takes decades to get from the exploration phase to that first drop of oil and requires vast amounts of capital expenditures. That is why we believe it is so critical that all OCS areas are included for review in the redevelopment of the new National Leasing Program. We must ensure that no opportunities are missed to prudently develop these resources. In doing so, we will advance the U.S. economy by providing a pathway for more jobs, shrink our trade deficit and increase government revenues received from offshore royalties.

Finally, under the Obama Administration, significant strides were made by both the government and industry to advance the safety of offshore exploration and production. We believe that we can protect workers and our environment while also developing these resources – they are not mutually exclusive goals. We rely on your leadership to ensure the OCS is developed in a safe, efficient and environmentally friendly manner.

Sincerely,



Jim Costa
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



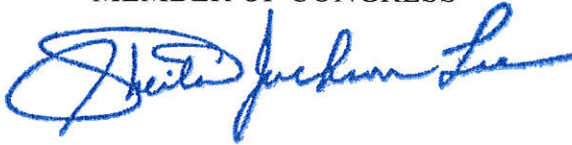
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