



PRESS RELEASE

Attorney General Frosh Leads Coalition of State Attorneys General Opposing Trump Administration's Plan to Expand Drilling off America's Coastlines *Department of Interior's Proposed Plan Would Dramatically Expand Offshore Drilling*

BALTIMORE, MD (March 9, 2018) – Maryland Attorney General Brian Frosh today led a coalition of 12 Attorneys General in submitting [comments](#) to the Department of Interior's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), opposing the Outer Continental Shelf Leasing Plan that BOEM has proposed for 2019-2024. BOEM's plan, if approved, would open the waters off the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts to new oil and gas leasing for the first time in decades.

"Maryland's coast and the Chesapeake Bay are among our most precious natural resources," said Attorney General Frosh. "The dangers that offshore drilling poses to our coastal environment and economy, including the Chesapeake Bay, are simply too great to accept. Instead of opening these areas to offshore drilling for fossil fuels, we should be focusing our efforts on increasing the development and use of wind, solar, and other forms of renewable energy."

The comments filed today highlight reasons why BOEM should follow the Department of Interior's past practice and exclude areas off the coast of the signatory states from any new leasing plan. For instance:

- The waters off of both coasts are environmentally significant and sensitive, offering vital habitat to birds, fish, plants, and marine mammals.
- All of the affected states are home to multiple competing uses of the coastal region—including tourism, commercial fishing, commerce, and wind energy—and their continued vitality would be threatened by new offshore oil and gas development.
- Even small-scale oil spills would cause significant harm to the coastal and marine environment. And a catastrophic oil spill, on the scale of the 2010 *Deepwater Horizon* disaster, would devastate our states' coastal environments and economies for a generation or more.

The Draft Proposed Program includes a schedule of 47 offshore oil and gas lease sales to take place during the 2019-2024 period. The schedule includes five lease sales in the North Atlantic and the Mid-Atlantic areas, as well as seven lease sales off the Pacific Coast. Many of those

lease sales are scheduled for waters - such as those off of Maryland's coast - that are not currently used for any oil or gas development.

In addition to Maryland, the comments were also supported by Attorneys General from California, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, Virginia, and Washington. In addition to these multi-state comments, Attorney General Frosh is also submitting separate comments highlighting Maryland's coastal resources and economy and discussing issues specific to the state.

BOEM issued its National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Draft Proposed Program for the 2019-2024 period in January 2018, acting pursuant to the federal Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act. BOEM is expected to issue a further version of its 2019-2024 leasing program for public comment, followed by a proposed final version of the program for congressional review and potential approval by the Secretary of the Interior.