



PRESS RELEASE

Attorney General Frosh's Statement on Trump Administration Opening Door to Seismic Testing in Atlantic Ocean

BALTIMORE, MD (November 30, 2018) – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh today issued the following statement in response to the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) announcement that it had granted incidental harassment authorizations, or IHAs, to five companies seeking to use airguns to conduct seismic testing in the Atlantic Ocean:

“The Trump Administration’s grant of these authorizations is misguided and unlawful. In opening the door to harassment of tens of thousands of marine mammals, including endangered species, the administration has again placed the interests of the fossil fuel industry ahead of our irreplaceable natural resources. We will continue to fight these and other efforts to open the waters off our coast to offshore drilling for oil and gas.”

In 2014 and 2015, five companies applied to the Interior Department’s Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) for permits to use seismic testing to survey the Atlantic Ocean floor in search of soil and gas. The testing would use airguns whose volume will exceed 160 decibels. These companies also applied to NMFS for IHAs allowing harassment of tens of thousands of marine mammals that the airguns would disturb. BOEM denied the permits on January 7, 2017, but then reversed the denials on May 16, 2017. In July 2017, Attorney General Frosh [led a coalition of state attorneys general](#) in urging the agency to deny incidental harassment authorizations. On November 30, 2018, the National Marine Fisheries Service issued a decision granting the IHAs. The next step is for BOEM to act on the permit applications themselves.