



Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Marjory Stoneman Douglas Building
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3000

Rick Scott
Governor

Carlos Lopez-Cantera
Lt. Governor

Noah Valenstein
Secretary

February 8, 2018

Ms. Kelly Hammerle, Chief
National Oil and Gas Leasing Program Development and Coordination Branch
Leasing Division
Office of Strategic Resources
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (VAM-LD)
45600 Woodland Road
Sterling, VA 20166-9216

Dear Ms. Hammerle:

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (Department) has reviewed the recently released Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's (BOEM) 2019-2024 Draft Proposed Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Leasing Program (Draft Proposed Program). We oppose the inclusion of any lease sales in Florida's coastal and offshore areas. Florida's coastal and offshore areas have high environmental, economic and military value not only for Florida, but also for the nation. These areas provide great economic impact for our citizens and provide each resident with recreational opportunities that are unique to Florida.

As the Department outlined in August 2017, we've remained concerned by the potential impacts of OCS oil and gas activities on marine and coastal environments and the biological resources and critical habitats associated with them, as well as the military activities critical to our nation's security. Therefore, Florida does not support the proposed lease sales offshore Florida as outlined in the Draft Proposed Program. These concerns were shared with Secretary Ryan Zinke by Governor Rick Scott. After a recent meeting with Governor Scott, Secretary Zinke announced that Florida was off the table for future consideration for offshore oil drilling. This commitment, secured by Governor Scott, was welcomed by everyone who opposes offshore oil drilling off Florida's coast.

On behalf of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, we are thankful for Secretary Zinke's personal engagement on these issues and his commitment to protecting Florida's environment. As we have seen in the past, oil spills can have a devastating impact to Florida's economy and our diverse natural resources. As BOEM continues to

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develop the next National OCS Program and to evaluate the program's impacts, primary consideration should be given to the long-term protection of Florida's unique and sensitive resources. Florida will continue to work with state, regional and local agencies to provide additional technical details outlining our objections to the proposed expansion of OCS oil activities in Florida's coastal and offshore areas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a series of fluid, connected strokes that form the name 'Noah Valenstein'.

Noah Valenstein
Secretary