

Carper, Coons Statement on the Trump Administration's Proposal to Expand Oil and Gas Drilling off the Coast of Delaware

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senators Tom Carper, top Democrat on the Environment and Public Works Committee, and Chris Coons (both D-Del.) submitted the following statement ahead of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's (BOEM) workshop in Dover, Delaware regarding the Trump Administration's recent proposal to revise the current 2017-2022 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program (Five-Year Plan) and potentially expand offshore oil and gas drilling in the Atlantic Ocean. Under the current Five-Year plan, which was finalized in November 2016, no expanded oil and gas drilling is allowed off the Atlantic or Pacific Coasts.

“Delaware is home to 28 miles of coastline that includes beautiful beaches, vibrant communities and thriving businesses that are critical to our state's economy. Many of our local economies rely on fishing, tourism and recreational activities that depend on a healthy coast. The Trump Administration's proposal, released earlier this month, to revisit the offshore drilling program three years ahead of schedule and potentially expand oil and gas drilling in the Atlantic is shortsighted. This decision ignores the input of both scientists and coastal residents and unnecessarily jeopardizes the environmental and economic well-being of the entire East Coast, including the First State.

“This is not a partisan issue. Republican governors and lawmakers from states up and down the East Coast also recognize that this is the wrong move. Recently, after facing opposition from Republican Governor Rick Scott of Florida, the Trump Administration decided to exempt only that state from this potential drilling expansion. That is wrong. Florida may have more coastline than our state and be home the president's beach resort, but Delawareans deserve to have their voices heard just as much as Floridians.

“Delaware's beaches bring in \$6.9 billion each year and support 10 percent of our state's workforce. An oil spill off our coast would be devastating, resulting in severe environmental and financial costs that would last for generations.

“We urge President Trump and Interior Secretary Zinke to listen to the coastal residents who will be most impacted by this decision, abandon this proposal and maintain the coastal protections outlined in the current Five-Year plan.”

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