

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

No. 221

Approved March 6, 2018

WHEREAS, The Bureau of Ocean and Energy Management (BOEM) in the U.S. Department of Interior has released the 2019-2024 National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Draft Proposed Program, a draft program proposal for offshore oil and gas leasing for the next five years; and

WHEREAS, The proposal would open the federal waters of the North Atlantic region to oil and gas exploration and drilling, an area that begins just three miles off the coasts of New Jersey through Maine, within which the State of Rhode Island is centrally situated; and

WHEREAS, Rhode Islanders have long relied upon New England's marine environment as a source of food, jobs, and recreation and, through strong laws and leadership at the state and local level, have conserved and protected our fisheries, habitats, and coastal resources; and

WHEREAS, Rhode Island's commitment to sound marine and coastal stewardship has reaped enormous cultural, environmental, and economic benefits for the citizens of the State, with healthy coastal communities, a vibrant Narragansett Bay, a thriving tourist industry, and productive fisheries all serving as hallmarks of the Ocean State; and

WHEREAS, Rhode Island has long been committed to sound ocean planning as a basis for accommodating new, sustainable ocean uses such as wind energy and is home to the nation's first off-shore wind farm; and

WHEREAS, Rhode Island recognizes and is acting upon the need to ensure that its coastal communities are resilient in the face of rising sea levels and other impacts associated with climate change; and

WHEREAS, Oil and gas drilling has never been viewed as compatible with our state and regional interests and thus has been removed from consideration for decades; and

WHEREAS, Prior experience has shown the devastating consequences of oil spills; and

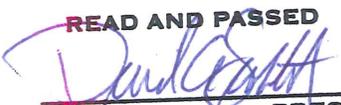
WHEREAS, Now, more than ever, Rhode Islanders, in every community, stand opposed to the use of our offshore waters to oil and gas drilling.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That we, united in our determination to protect our cultural heritage, our marine ecosystem, and our economic future, hereby call upon the Secretary of the Interior to remove the North Atlantic region from consideration for oil and gas exploration and drilling.

IN CITY COUNCIL

MAR 01 2018

READ AND PASSED


PRES.


CLERK

I HEREBY APPROVE.


Mayor
Date: 3/6/18



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR GINA M. RAIMONDO

February 13, 2018

The Honorable David Salvatore
City Council President, City of Providence
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Council President Salvatore:

The proposed inclusion of the North Atlantic Region in the National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program¹ for 2019-2024 came as a shock to many of us. For good reason, the region has long been excluded from consideration, and under the prior Administration, that status had been extended through 2022.

I have heard from Rhode Islanders throughout the state who are deeply troubled over the potential loss of more than three decades of protection afforded to the North Atlantic. They are calling upon Rhode Island's leaders to push back against this potentially disastrous proposal, one that threatens our cultural, environmental, and economic interests, and clashes with our clean energy policies and initiatives.

On behalf of our fishing and tourism industries, our coastal communities, and everyone who values the health and welfare of Narragansett Bay and our coastal waters, I will be pushing back hard, and I want you to join me.

The inclusion of the North Atlantic Region in the Leasing Program is not a done deal. Currently, the Interior Department is seeking public comments on the program proposal, subject to a March 9, 2018 deadline². In concert with state departments, my office is preparing comments for submission that will detail our opposition to oil and gas drilling within a regional context. However, I believe that a coordinated, state-wide response that captures the breadth of objections to this proposal and voices the sentiments of Rhode Island's coastal communities will prove the most impactful. To that end, I am asking the leaders of coastal cities and towns to adopt resolutions that oppose the program proposal for inclusion in our submission to the Interior Department.

For your convenience, a draft resolution has been enclosed here. The program proposal and its detrimental impacts merit lengthy comment, and although the draft touches on a fair number of issues, it is not comprehensive by any measure. I encourage you to modify this document as you deem appropriate and in accordance with the interests and concerns of the residents of Providence. Should you wish to submit your municipality's passed resolution as part of a single, statewide response, please contact Rico Vota at Rico.Vota@Governor.RI.Gov, or (401) 222-8294 by Monday, March 5th.

Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration of this matter. I hope you will stand shoulder-to-shoulder with your fellow leaders to oppose this proposal.

Sincerely,

Gina M. Raimondo
Governor

¹ <https://www.boem.gov/NP-Draft-Proposed-Program-2019-2024/>

² <https://www.boem.gov/National-OCS-Oil-and-Gas-Leasing-Program-for-2019-2024/>