

January XX, 2019

Dear Colleague:

We invite you to co-sponsor the bipartisan *Atlantic Coastal Economies Protection Act* which would prohibit or stop seismic airgun testing in the Atlantic Ocean. Seismic airgun testing is a necessary precursor to offshore oil drilling and its devastating impacts on coastal economies and the environment. An event like the 2010 BP Deepwater Horizon disaster in the Gulf of Mexico would threaten at least over 1.5 million jobs in the Atlantic and nearly \$108 billion in Gross Domestic Product.

On Nov. 30, 2018, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) issued five Incidental Harassment Authorizations (IHAs), which advance permit applications for seismic airgun blasting in the Atlantic. These permits authorize five companies to use seismic airguns that can disturb, harm and potentially kill marine mammals and other marine life that support coastal economies from Maine to Florida. Seismic airgun testing, the first step in offshore oil and gas exploration and development, risks harming coastal economies based on tourism, fishing and recreation. Studies have shown the harmful impacts that seismic airgun blasting has on fisheries and marine mammals, adversely impacting the catch anglers bring dockside and the revenues generated by related businesses. Furthermore, contrary to proponents' claims, any seismic survey data collected would be proprietary, only available to the oil and gas industry and not to the public. Vital naval operations and training mission that operate off the East Coast could also be impacted.

The *Atlantic Coastal Economies Protection Act* would prohibit the Department of Interior from issuing any geologic and geophysical exploration permits in the Atlantic Ocean. Any such permits issued before enactment of this Act would be declared null and void upon the bill becoming law.

Join more than 1,500 local, state and federal bipartisan officials, 240 East Coast and Gulf municipalities, over 42,000 businesses and 500,000 fishing families, all three East Coast fishery management councils, commercial and recreational fishing organizations and the governors of Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine in opposition to seismic airgun blasting in the Atlantic Ocean.

To co-sponsor the bipartisan *Atlantic Coastal Economies Protection Act*, contact Javier Gamboa with Rep. Van Drew (NJ-2) at Javier.Gamboa@mail.house.gov or Jenifer Bradley Nawrocki with Rep. Rutherford (FL-4) at Jenifer.Nawrocki@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

Jeff Van Drew
Member of Congress

John Rutherford
Member of Congress