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RADICAL FIVE-YEAR OFFSHORE PLAN WILL HEIGHTEN SPILL RISKS FOR U.S. COASTAL AREAS

Plan Poses Huge Risk to Coastal Economies, Businesses and Marine Life in Previously Undeveloped Waters.

WASHINGTON, DC. //January 4, 2018// The Trump Administration is ignoring sound science and broad public input in an exhaustive recent review, in its proposed Five-Year Plan for offshore oil and gas leasing released today. The proposed plan promises “severe and unacceptable harm” to America’s publicly-owned oceans, coastal economies, public health, climate and marine life—all in a bid to pursue dubious energy sources that America does not need, according to 64 groups.

The proposed drilling plan unveiled by Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke would radically expand offshore drilling in new areas of the Atlantic, Pacific, Gulf of Mexico and Arctic waters, and auction off permanently protected areas.

The protections in the current five-year plan are based on scientific analysis and a multi-year public comment process, whereas the Trump Administration’s hastily concocted proposal is rife with unsubstantiated claims, faulty economics, and runs roughshod over documented public opinion. Specifically, the proposal would expose the Arctic waters—our last undeveloped ocean—to drilling, put the Atlantic coast on the chopping block for the first time since 1983, open the Pacific coast—which has not seen federal drilling for decades, and further threaten the debilitated Gulf of Mexico.

The groups’ joint statement follows:

“These ocean waters are not President Trump’s personal playground. They belong to all Americans and the public wants them preserved and protected, not sold off to multinational oil companies.

The Trump Administration’s plan to unleash the dangers of drilling offshore is a major, unacceptable risk to hundreds of local communities, their coastal economies, and marine life.”

This extreme proposal is a shameful give-away that would sacrifice coastal communities, its economies, and our publicly-owned ocean waters.

Drilling threatens to coat our beaches with oil spills, pollute our air, decimate fisheries, interfere with military training, and keep citizens bound to the whims of foreign oil markets.

There is no need to force coastal residents to shoulder these risks. The nation can meet its energy needs and grow jobs by investing in clean, renewable domestic sources like wind and solar that never run out. We can cut pollution, and keep profits right here at home—not in the pockets of oil industry executives and foreign governments.

No community should have to live every day under the threat of an oil spill that could destroy tourism, shutter hundreds of local businesses, throw thousands out of work, and decimate traditional ways of life. We cannot afford another crippling Gulf of Mexico disaster—off the shores of Louisiana, the Carolinas, New England, Alaska, California or anywhere else.

The Trump Administration should heed the public call to preserve our ocean waters and turn back from this reckless, unnecessary expansion of offshore drilling that puts America and marine life last and the bottom lines of private oil companies first.”

With the backing of science, economics, clean energy leaders, local businesses, and the vast majority of Americans, President Obama permanently protected most of the Arctic Ocean and a chain of deep sea canyons in the Atlantic Ocean, stretching from the Chesapeake Bay to Canada’s border, from dirty and dangerous offshore oil drilling. He also removed the entire Arctic and Atlantic from the five-year leasing plan.

Americans have rejected the Trump Administration’s move to abandon the Obama Administration’s approach by expanding dirty and dangerous offshore drilling and energy exploration. That opposition includes tens of thousands of local businesses and hundreds of thousands of commercial fishing families that depend on clean coasts, the majority of Americans, over 130 coastal municipalities, many Alaska Natives, bi-partisan lawmakers at the local, state and federal levels, and a host of faith and conservation leaders.

Here is the alphabetical list of the 64 signers of the joint statement:

Alaska Wilderness League, Alliance for Climate Education, America Verde, American Littoral Society, Americans for Conservation & the Arts, Azul, Blue Frontier, Bold Alliance, California Coastkeeper Alliance, California League of Conservation Voters, Center for Biological Diversity, Checks & Balances Project, Clean Ocean Action, Clean Water Action, Climate Hawks Vote, The Climate Reality Project, Connecticut League of Conservation Voters, Conservation Law Foundation, Conservatives for Responsible Stewardship, Corazon Latino, Defenders of Wildlife, Earthjustice, Environment America, Environment California, Environment New Jersey, Environmental League of Massachusetts, Florida Conservation Voters, Friends of the Earth, Gasp, Green Latinos, Greenpeace, Gulf Restoration Network, Hands Across the Sand, Hip Hop Caucus, Inland Ocean Coalition, Institute for Ocean Conservation Science at Stony Brook University, Latino Farmers and Ranchers, League of Conservation Voters, League of Women Voters of the United States, Marine Conservation Institute, Maryland League of Conservation Voters, Massachusetts League of Conservation Voters, Natural Resources Defense Council, New Jersey League of Conservation Voters, New York League of Conservation Voters, NextGen America, North Carolina League of Conservation Voters, Oceana, Oil Change International, Oregon League of Conservation Voters, The Power Shift Network, Sachamama, Save Our Shores, Sierra Club, Surfrider Foundation, Turtle Island Restoration Network, Vermont Conservation Voters, Vermont Natural Resources Council, Virginia League of Conservation Voters, Voces Verdes, Washington Conservation Voters, Washington Environmental Council, and The Wilderness Society.

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