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BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT
Public Meeting

Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement
Proposed Geological and Geophysical Activities
in the Mid- and South Atlantic OCS Planning Areas

April 26, 2012, 7:06 p.m.

Hilton Wilmington Riverside
301 North Water Street
Wilmington, North Carolina 28401
Session reported by: Glynde M. Jones

1 MR. GOEKE: Good evening. Thank you very much for
2 coming out this evening. I appreciate y'all coming out
3 on a rainy -- like we have. My name is Gary Goeke. I'm
4 chief of the Regional Assessment Section of the Bureau
5 of Ocean Energy Management out of New Orleans. The
6 gentleman to my right is Doctor Tom Bjerstedt. Tom is
7 the program manager for the EIS that we put together
8 this evening that we're collecting comments on. Tom
9 will be running the show this evening to try and make
10 sure we give you enough information so that you can
11 understand what we are actually proposing, what we have
12 written on our document, and at the same time collecting
13 information and comments from you.

14 Now what we're going to do, we're going to have
15 a short opening presentation from Tom, and then we're
16 going to start collecting comments from everyone who has
17 signed up. The folks who have signed up will come first.
18 After we exhaust the list of everyone who has signed up,
19 then we will open it up for folks who would like to
20 speak.

21 We have a court reporter, and she's taking a
22 verbatim transcript this evening of everything that's
23 being said. Now, considering how she does it, we need to
24 give her fingers a break every 60 minutes or so, okay?
25 So at some point after we just get rolling well, we're

1 going to take a break for about ten minutes and let her
2 do some finger exercises over there.

3 One of the important points -- and Tom will
4 stress this as we get to this later this evening. One of
5 the important points that we need to try and make sure
6 everyone understands here this evening is as we are
7 creating an environmental impact statement, this is
8 really -- it's a process that we go through. We have
9 laws, we have regulations that we follow, and one of the
10 things that we have to do is create what they call an
11 administrative record.

12 The administrative record is a very detailed
13 document that we -- it's a process that we follow
14 internally. We build our documentation on exactly how we
15 do everything we do. This discussion this evening is
16 part of that administrative record, and this is why what
17 we're going to ask you to do is keep your comments to
18 the topic at hand this evening. We have a lot of folks
19 here who can answer questions off to the side. We will
20 be glad to stay with you after the meeting and answer
21 additional questions if you have some questions that are
22 unrelated to the topic that we're talking about this
23 evening, but if you could, please focus on the proposal,
24 focus on the reason that Tom will be talking about, and
25 that will help move things along.

1 We have a lot of people. We're not going to
2 leave until everybody gets a chance to speak.

3 This is Tom.

4 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: This is the document to which
5 we're referring to tonight. It's one of two volumes, so
6 there is objective evidence that we have a document on
7 the street that's under review. This is our public
8 meeting schedule that has been announced for our draft
9 programmatic environmental impact statement. You can see
10 here we have been on the road since last week and we
11 will finish up at the end of this week. Today we have
12 two groups on the road, actually, and one was in
13 Wilmington, Delaware, and we are here today in
14 Wilmington, North Carolina.

15 We've distributed the draft -- we have a 60 day
16 comment period that is in effect until the end of May,
17 May 30th. The notice of availability was published in
18 the Federal Register on March 30, 2012. We're here to
19 collect your comments and oral testimony or anything you
20 care to submit to us in writing to help us revise the
21 document to a final product that will be used by the
22 Secretary of the Interior for a decision on the proposed
23 action that we're talking about tonight.

24 Public input is an important part of the
25 National Environmental Policy Act. It is the chartered

1 act by which the Federal Government -- the decision that
2 it makes about action to take place on Federal land
3 before those decisions are made, and public input is
4 part of that process. That's one of the reasons we're
5 here tonight, to receive input from you and from
6 everyone else while we have a comment period that's
7 open.

8 The purpose of the programmatic EIS is to assess
9 the potential environmental impact of various techniques
10 that constitute geological and geophysical testing in
11 the South and Mid-Atlantic planning areas of the Outer
12 Continental Shelf. Our document has a section where we
13 look at the activity levels that have been proposed by
14 way of interest by industry which really constitute a
15 permit application for work that they would like to do.
16 We try to project what the activity level would be
17 between now and 2020.

18 We evaluate the mitigation measures that are
19 available to reduce or eliminate impact on the resources
20 that are in these areas. This information and the
21 analysis that is in the documents is used by our agency
22 and other agencies that have responsibilities under
23 environmental law in managing the resources that they're
24 responsible for prior to making the decision to do this
25 work.

1 This is a map that shows the projected
2 activities based on permit applications that have been
3 received by the Department of the Interior for seismic
4 surveying activities in the Mid-Atlantic and South
5 Atlantic planning areas. What it's showing is in -- the
6 darker colors are indicating areas of overlap where
7 operators have requested permits to conduct surveys. The
8 lighter the area, the less interest that's been
9 expressed for a survey there.

10 The proposed action in the document is to
11 authorize geological and geophysical activity in the
12 three program areas that are managed by our bureau, and
13 they constitute oil and gas, renewable energy and marine
14 minerals program, which is generally sand that is
15 brought offshore and used onshore for restoration or
16 beach nourishment.

17 What you see on the map is these areas, the
18 South Atlantic planning area, the Mid-Atlantic planning
19 area here, some of these boundaries. Here is the edge of
20 the exclusive economic zone for the United States. It
21 extends shoreward out to a distance of 200 nautical
22 miles. The water and the seabeds from this line inshore
23 are all territory of the Unites States. The state waters
24 is -- on this scale of map, you really can't tell, but
25 it's a band three miles from shoreline out that's state

1 waters. Our Federal waters begin at that boundary and
2 extend outward.

3 This boundary here is the edge of the extended
4 Continental Shelf. That concept originates from the
5 United Nations convention of the Law of the Sea. It is a
6 means by which a country can lay claim to an area that's
7 larger than 200 nautical miles from shore, which is
8 based on a treaty that we have signed, and it involves a
9 process of data gathering and collection and then
10 finally committing it for UN consideration in order to
11 claim this area for United States waters and seabed.
12 That is not -- has not been actualized yet, but our
13 evaluation wanted to include those waters, because we
14 don't really know if or when the United States might
15 pursue that action, so that's why we wanted to include
16 it as part of our document.

17 Types of G&G activities -- geological consists
18 of coring on seabeds, deep shallow stratigraphic tests.
19 These are less than 500 feet in depth below the mudline.
20 Deep stratigraphic tests are generally deeper than 500
21 feet, and it's unspecified exactly how deep they can go,
22 but it's deeper than 500 feet. These are not exploration
23 kinds of hole or -- they are for testing the layering of
24 the rocks, the layering of the sediment. They are not
25 meant to produce oil and gas, because you need a Federal

1 lease in order to do that. If you did discover anything,
2 you couldn't produce it.

3 Geophysical techniques include two and three
4 dimensional seismic surveying with airgun technology
5 that include controlled source electromagnetic surveys.
6 These are techniques that industry uses to determine the
7 fluid or gassiest contents of rocks below the surface.
8 High-resolution geophysical surgery include -- they're
9 primarily geoengineering in nature. They involve
10 multibeam echosounders. These are used for
11 determining -- sidescan sonar is used to determine the
12 nature of the bottom, whether you will have a hard
13 bottom, also obstructions on the bottom, if you have a
14 shipwreck, for example.

15 Boomer is a technology that sounds -- it's not
16 an airgun technology. It's an electromechanical
17 technique, an electrical current that's discharged into
18 the water and acts on the -- on a strip of metal and the
19 metal expands and causes a pulse in the water column.
20 It's not the same kind of technology as an airgun --
21 also includes gravity and magnetic surveys. These tend
22 to be conducted at the time that a geophysical survey is
23 run.

24 Impact-producing factors is a term of art for an
25 analysis like this. You have routine operations that are

1 predicted based on the nature of the work that's
2 proposed and accidental activities that could result
3 from those conditions and -- that are in the nature of
4 the work that's proposed. For routine operations, we're
5 talking about airguns. We're talking about emitting
6 sound in the water. For electromechanical sound sources,
7 these are electrical energy and minor types of pulsing
8 of the seawater column in order to bounce off of
9 sediment surfaces and layers in the sediment -- talking
10 about aircraft noise and presence.

11 Some of these large boats require crew changes
12 at sea, and when they're at sea for many weeks requiring
13 a survey -- sooner or later, there's going to have to be
14 crew changes and other sort of things brought in.

15 Drilling and coring include operational waste
16 that -- whenever you drill into the seabed, you produce
17 mud cuttings that come up, and these tend to be
18 discharged on the sea bottom. Seafloor disturbances
19 include things like mud cutting, but it also includes
20 anything that touches the bottom -- sampling of the
21 bottom itself like a grab sample or placement of
22 anchors, cables or sensors. Those are something that
23 impact the natural environment.

24 Onshore base support services -- when boats are
25 working offshore, they have an onshore component of

1 support that's required. They have to dock somewhere.
2 They have to receive supplies from somewhere, and people
3 that work on the boats live somewhere. Vessel traffic
4 and noise -- by virtue of surveys that are conducted,
5 there's the physical presence of vessels, exclusion
6 zones that involve safety or observation for protected
7 species, and boats on the water generate waste by nature
8 of people working on the water.

9 Accidental events would include a fuel spill
10 that might result from an accident at sea. Since we're
11 not talking about producing oil and gas, we're not
12 talking about exploration for oil and gas, we -- we're
13 not talking about anchors or pipelines and the only
14 really accidental thing that could happen is a spill of
15 diesel that is the result of an accident.

16 Environmental resources include benthic
17 communities and also living on the bottom fish and
18 fisheries, marine mammals, sea turtles, coastal and
19 marine birds and protected species that belong in any of
20 those categories. For socioeconomic issues,
21 archaeological resources, the Atlantic seaboard is an
22 area with a long human history. There's a lot of
23 shipwrecks there. Marine protected areas include special
24 places that have been designated in law, and for our
25 purposes in the Mid-Atlantic planning area, we have the

1 Monitor National Marine sanctuary in the Mid-Atlantic.
2 In the South Atlantic, we have Gray's Reef.

3 Other marine uses would include some of the
4 military applications that are taking place offshore.
5 There's large tracts of the sea surface that are used by
6 the Department of Defense, also activities that take
7 place underwater and even in the air, but things might
8 be dropped in the water. We have to examine our proposed
9 action in context with already existing and authorized
10 uses of that area.

11 The heart and soul of an EIS are the
12 alternatives that are created in order to analyze the
13 proposed action and also to lay out feasible
14 alternatives that support that activity that the
15 decision maker can consider in the process of making a
16 decision about whether to do the work or not. For our
17 document, we have created three of them.

18 Alternative A is based on two things, existing
19 area restrictions that are recognized by the National
20 Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration for
21 protection of the Northern Right Whales along parts of
22 the Atlantic. These area closures have been identified.
23 I'll show you a map in a little bit -- by NOAA to
24 protect the whales when they tend to concentrate in
25 these areas during their yearly migration.

1 Also as part of our alternative are protective
2 measures that have been developed for the Gulf of Mexico
3 that have been practiced over a long history of use and
4 application there. They include the conditions under
5 which surveys are begun, under which they continue and
6 then under which they may terminate. It includes
7 protected species observers that are always on watch
8 while the survey is underway for protected species, all
9 marine mammals on the water. It includes speed
10 restrictions when marine mammals are encountered,
11 include trash and debris awareness, because any time we
12 introduce by accident or by -- in some other way if you
13 introduce trash and debris, sometimes animals can
14 mistake it for things that they eat, and so that's
15 important to be aware of that. So we have a suite of
16 protective measures for the Gulf of Mexico that we
17 propose to import in the Atlantic and measure their
18 applicability there.

19 For Alternative B, we state all of the
20 mitigations that are part of Alternative A. These area
21 of restrictions will be called time/area closures,
22 and we expanded and we had additional types of
23 mitigation for additional protection. These would
24 include closure areas for nesting sea turtles in
25 offshore Central Florida and expansion of the seasonal

1 management area for the Northern Right Whale. Separation
2 between simultaneous seismic surveys would be a part of
3 Alternative B so that surveys that are taking place at
4 the same time are not closely overlapping that -- allow
5 an area around the survey that's not fully -- at sound
6 levels or lower.

7 And also in B would be required passive acoustic
8 monitoring. This is a technique whereby sensitive
9 hydrophones are in the water and a technician monitors
10 for the telltale indication of marine mammals
11 underwater. There's various singings and creaking noises
12 that marine mammals could make, and if you hear them
13 underwater, then you might have an idea that they're
14 there. If you see them at the surface, you know they're
15 there, but if they're underwater, you can't know they're
16 there. This technique is one tool that can be used to
17 potentially identify their presence so that the surveys
18 could be modified in process.

19 Alternative C is a requirement of an
20 environmental impact statement. It's a -- it's
21 essentially a negation of the proposed action, saying
22 okay, we propose this activity. What if we don't propose
23 this activity? What are the environmental impacts and
24 consequences of that? And for our no action
25 alternative -- so since we do not have oil and gas

1 activities in the Mid and South Atlantic now or have had
2 at any time since the late 1970s or early 1980s when the
3 last lease sales were held there, we're talking about a
4 no action that would say simply a negation of the
5 proposed action, that this activity is not allowed to go
6 forward for that aspect of our program.

7 Our renewable energy and marine mineral program
8 is currently authorized uses in this area, and what
9 we're proposing for in Alternative C is that since
10 applicants can come to us now and we would process their
11 application and their requests for leases for renewable
12 energy, we would process those now as we receive them,
13 and as marine mineral usage is requested, we would
14 process those applications. So the Alternative C for
15 these two parts of our program is not to stop something
16 that's currently authorized, but for oil and gas,
17 because it has not occurred in these areas for many
18 years, we're talking about the wisdom of beginning that
19 activity again. So that's the nature of how we framed
20 Alternative C.

21 These are the time/area closures that I had
22 mentioned. This hatched area is the critical habitat
23 that's been designated by NOAA Fisheries for the
24 Northern Right Whale. It extends down the Florida
25 coastline to the southern border of the South Atlantic

1 planning area. The box in orange is what NOAA calls the
2 southeast seasonal management area. The Mid-Atlantic
3 seasonal management area is shown in yellow here. What
4 these regions are showing are areas where NOAA has
5 recognized in current regulations that vessels
6 transiting these areas during these periods of year are
7 required to slow down because whales are in the area.
8 Usually the greatest hazard to a marine mammal is the
9 possibility of being struck by a vessel.

10 The cusped areas around -- further north are at
11 the heads of major estuaries and ports where you would
12 expect concentration of traffic on the water, so NOAA is
13 saying that in the period of time that marine mammals
14 are here, vessels need to slow down. What we're saying
15 for our alternative in the EIS is that in the same
16 period of time that NOAA is recognizing that vessels
17 need to go slower, we're saying no airgun activities in
18 these areas.

19 For Alternative B, I mentioned that the
20 philosophy for that alternative was to enhance and
21 enlarge some of the existing closure areas that NOAA has
22 recognized for our purposes. Here what we've done is
23 extend along the floor a band at the end or the southern
24 end of the southeastern seasonal management area, and in
25 effect -- it's hard to see, but in effect, close off or

1 complete the boundary for the Mid-Atlantic planning area
2 for these periods of time.

3 So essentially what we're proposing for
4 Alternative B is from the head of Delaware Bay all the
5 way to Cape Canaveral, there is a band of shoreline from
6 offshore out to 20 nautical miles from that area all the
7 way down the seaboard to the southern end of the South
8 Atlantic planning area for -- that we would restrict
9 airgun activities in those areas for those periods of
10 time.

11 The reason the periods of time are staggered is
12 because the whales winter off the New England states,
13 and as the months progress, they migrate down the
14 coastline and they calve in this area which has been
15 identified as critical habitat for them. So they're in
16 the process of migrating through the year, and as the
17 year turns, they return, and so their likelihood of
18 being concentrated in any one area -- depending on how
19 long it takes for them to transit the area, so that's
20 why you see some of these dates were a bit staggered.

21 Offshore of Cape Canaveral in Central Florida,
22 this area is well-recognized for Loggerhead and
23 Leatherback sea turtles. There are thousands of nests
24 that are observed here, reported here. The animals come
25 ashore. They lay their eggs. The hatchlings hatch. Then

1 they migrate offshore. What we're saying is because this
2 area is so highly concentrated, that we would restrict
3 seismic activity here for this reason for this period of
4 time. Yes, turtles do nest all along the eastern
5 seaboard, but they are especially concentrated here.
6 That's why we've designated this time/area closure for
7 that reason.

8 This chart shows sort of a summary of mitigation
9 measures that apply to each alternative. The time/area
10 closures for the North Atlantic Right Whale, we have
11 them. Of course, we recognize them for A. We have
12 expanded them for B. The seismic survey protocol, the
13 so-called ramp-up of the seismic airgun, visual
14 observers and startup and shutdown procedures, yes, they
15 apply to both alternatives. Passive acoustic monitoring
16 is recognized and required for B but optional for A.
17 The separation between simultaneous survey, recognized
18 for B, but not for A. High-resolution geophysical survey
19 protocol for non-airguns are recognized for both.
20 Guidance for vessel strike avoidance and marine debris
21 awareness would be recognized for both.

22 What you'll see in the documents in Table 2-2 of
23 the EIS is this -- an example of the way that we've
24 tried to display the results of our evaluation in the
25 way that can be looked at in a summary fashion so that

1 somebody could make an -- what our study has concluded,
2 but you see here in that table the resource down the
3 left hand side and impact producing factors that would
4 apply to it in the table in the document -- you have to
5 look at it. This is just an example of the way it's laid
6 out, with the alternatives along the upper margin.

7 And what we have here are impact significant
8 criteria. It's a verbal qualitative descriptor of the
9 impact level that is assigned for that resource, for
10 that impact producing factor. In our documents, they are
11 defined at the head and early sections of Chapter Four,
12 and they range from negligible all the way to major.
13 What you see -- what you will see in the document is
14 that we don't have major impact for any resource for any
15 impacting factor. What you'll also see is that many,
16 many impacting factors are insignificant for many
17 resources.

18 While a EIS is underway, there are consultations
19 that are required under various environmental laws. Most
20 familiar to many people, perhaps the Endangered Species
21 Act, also Marine Mammal Protection Act. We have
22 consultations that have to take place with NOAA
23 Fisheries, who, by the way, are a cooperating agency for
24 those evaluations.

25 Insofar as the next steps, after we have a draft

1 document on the street for comment during April and
2 May -- we're sort of right in the middle of this comment
3 period. Once we receive comments from folks like
4 yourself and from state and Federal agencies, we begin
5 an incorporation of them in the document. We look at all
6 of them. We attempt to address those that seem like a
7 good idea and prepare a final environmental impact
8 statement on the basis of these comments. They're all
9 included as a summary of the comments and how they have
10 been responded to on part of the final EIS in an
11 appendix in it.

12 Finally, we'll have a roll up of recommendations
13 for the management on how to proceed. I mentioned to you
14 that the environmental consultations are all occurring
15 while we're in the process of commenting and revising
16 the document. We are beginning consultations with NOAA
17 Fisheries on their resources, which are all marine
18 mammals. Usually if all goes well, those consultations
19 are completed by the time the environmental impact
20 statement is done. And at the end of the process, we
21 have a record of decision, which is a announcement in
22 the Federal Register as to what the Secretary of the
23 Interior has decided to do with respect to the proposed
24 action, and for that, we are anticipating that before
25 the end of the calendar year.

1 So I mentioned to you that the comment period
2 closes on May 30th. We can collect comments from you
3 tonight in oral testimony or anything you hand to us in
4 writing. We have a dedicated e-mail address,
5 ggeis@boem.gov, where you can send comments to us. The
6 materials at the tables outside identify for you the
7 hyperlinks or at least the website address for where the
8 document is -- is published there. You can pick it up
9 and have a look at it. If you wish to send us comments
10 by United States post, you have an address here, which
11 is also in that material that is available outside. So
12 if you want to make a comment, grab it on your way out,
13 if you haven't grabbed it on your way in, and it will
14 show you how to provide comments to us. Also, you can
15 sign up for -- on a mailing list for future activity
16 that's in the Atlantic by signing up on our website
17 that's also described in the handout materials.

18 In closing then, I would say I'd like to just
19 summarize by mentioning that it's taken us more than a
20 year to prepare this evaluation. The evaluation itself
21 was directed by Congress. It was directed in our
22 appropriation language in 2010. Because we have permit
23 applications from industries in hand and we had really
24 no way to act on them, the Congress said go forth and do
25 this evaluation, and so this evaluation is under direct

1 authority of the Congress in our appropriation language,
2 which they have dedicated funding for. It involves state
3 of -- practice modeling for sound in the water that is
4 caused by the tools that we're talking about here, by
5 sound in the water caused by airguns, sound in the water
6 caused by the electromechanical techniques and tools.

7 It can be kind of daunting to understand what
8 the implications are for it, but we've done our best to
9 look at these impacting factors and look at the
10 resources that are at issue and involve -- some
11 conclusions about them. What we would ask of you and
12 what we would ask of everybody is to take a look at them
13 yourselves and evaluate them yourself and provide
14 comments for how you think we can improve the document.

15 With that, I think I'll begin the commenting
16 period, but before I do that, I want to provide some
17 guidelines for fairness as we go into public commenting.
18 Our goal is to allow comments from everyone who has
19 signed up to speak basically until we're done. Federal
20 and state representatives may speak for -- with no time
21 restrictions. Members of the public, we ask you to
22 police yourselves to three minutes so that everybody can
23 speak who has asked to speak. After everyone who has
24 asked to speak has spoken, we will open the floor for
25 additional comments.

1 We are here to receive comments on the draft
2 programmatic EIS, and comments about anything else that
3 don't pertain to it really don't support our purpose for
4 being here. We're not really here to debate the merits
5 of the proposed action. We're here to receive your
6 comments on how to improve the draft that we've prepared
7 already.

8 Please refrain from clapping and other
9 demonstrations, because it tends to intimidate people
10 who may not be as strongly convinced one way or another,
11 and they may not choose to speak. So we would ask you
12 not to do that. People that may comment, please address
13 us here at the head of the room as opposed to addressing
14 other people in the audience. We can answer short
15 general information type questions, but we're not really
16 here to engage in a question and answer period.

17 If you're speaking from notes, it would help the
18 court reporter a great deal if you can turn them in so
19 that she can use them to corroborate the work that she's
20 recording verbally here.

21 And with that, I would call the first speaker,
22 North Carolina State Senator Thom Goolsby.

23 SENATOR GOOLSBY: Thank you, sir. And I will try
24 to hold my remarks to three minutes like you've
25 requested from the public. It's my pleasure to be here.

1 I have just finished working, along with Senator
2 Rabon right here who is with us tonight, on the Energy
3 Subcommittee here in the State of North Carolina. One of
4 our concerns was the fact that we may have potential
5 significant natural gas offshore, and as we convert our
6 power plants here in North Carolina from coal to clean
7 burning natural gas, just as we have done in the Sutton
8 plant over here -- we're in the process of spending a
9 lot of money to do -- it would be nice to know if we do
10 have significant natural gas reserves. We know that when
11 the last surveys were done back in the late '70s and
12 '80s, there appeared to be significant natural gas off
13 the Outer Banks in a -- square nautical mile -- nine
14 nautical mile area of five trillion cubic feet.

15 It's our concern on the state level that if we
16 can actually harvest clean burning natural gas -- I'm
17 talking about natural gas -- and pipe it in, according
18 to the folks at Piedmont Natural Gas, we already have a
19 large significant amount of people in North Carolina
20 that could receive that gas immediately.

21 We also are in the process now of converting
22 our buses in North Carolina on a school level and our
23 state transportation vehicles to clean burning natural
24 gas. Having our own supply of that right offshore is
25 something we would like to at least know we have and

1 then investigate over the next two years whether or not
2 that can be harvested safely and without environmental
3 degradation and destroying any of our beautiful natural
4 coast that I represent all of New Hanover County on.

5 We would ask that you seriously consider -- I
6 would ask that you seriously consider Alternative A and
7 moving ahead. It's been many, many years since we have
8 been able to assess this and know exactly what we have.
9 According to the information you presented us tonight,
10 there are a number of safeguards that are in effect, and
11 as we attempt to convert away from the fossil fuel of
12 oil and gasoline, it would be nice to have our own
13 supply of natural gas and know that it's there and that
14 it can be tapped, so I would ask you to seriously
15 consider Alternative A.

16 Thank you for your time.

17 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Thank you. Mac Montgomery.

18 MR. MONTGOMERY: Thank you very much for having
19 me here. I'm the chairman of the Cape Fear -- Sierra
20 Club, and you heard testimony from the Sierra Club this
21 morning. We represent 22,000 people in the State of
22 North Carolina. Sierra Club, as you are probably aware,
23 is the oldest and largest environmental organization in
24 the nation with almost 1.4 million members nationwide.
25 To start off, we urge the Bureau of Ocean Energy

1 Management to adopt Alternative C, and I'll cover the
2 reasons why.

3 Here on the coast of North Carolina, we enjoy a
4 unique situation, in that we have almost a three billion
5 dollar tourism industry, including recreational and
6 commercial fishing. We have almost a two billion
7 dollar -- people come to our lovely state because of our
8 environment. They come in here, and people relocate
9 here, retirees come here and businesses come here.

10 And we need energy for the future. We certainly
11 do. And the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management has been
12 working tirelessly with the State of North Carolina,
13 with a taskforce borne by the Governor over the past 18
14 months to identify offshore renewable resources that can
15 be used and harnassed to meet those needs for the future
16 for North Carolina.

17 North Carolina has the greatest offshore wind
18 resource of any place on the East Coast of the United
19 States, and through cooperation with the Bureau of Ocean
20 Energy Management, the state leaders, some of whom are
21 sitting here today, and commercial enterprises who have
22 expressed interest off our coast, we can move forward,
23 and the Sierra Club feels that's the way we should
24 proceed and that we should not go forward with any
25 seismic testing which will be followed, we feel, by

1 offshore drilling.

2 Thank you very much for your time.

3 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: I apologize that I skipped
4 Charles Moss, an elected official.

5 BY MR. MOSS: I have to correct -- I'm not
6 elected. I'm a Republican candidate for Governor of
7 North Carolina, among 13 people running for it, one of
8 them -- 90 years old.

9 But there's a lot of interest in what's going on
10 in North Carolina. I came here early and talked to Gary
11 tonight, and I've researched all this, and I am against
12 all of it, period. Being a former Air Force man, we came
13 down a lot of times flying under radar, going down
14 around Cuba and places -- and a 200 foot windmill was
15 the last thing we wanted to run into.

16 And I just think that to begin with, you only
17 have, you know, right now -- is 36 day supply of oil.
18 You only have 200 days supply of natural gas. I don't
19 see the advantage of it. I'm against hydraulic -- too.

20 We don't have an energy shortage. We have a
21 problem -- economic. Our money is worthless. So the
22 world is overrunning with natural gas, petroleum and
23 salt caves and everything else everywhere, and the price
24 of it will drop in half within a year, and I just cannot
25 see -- in the future, you may be forced to do this. But

1 I also own a real estate company, and if you had an oil
2 spill down here, it would be worse than the one you had
3 before, and we have hurricanes all the time.

4 I also was an elected saltwater conservation
5 supervisor and on the state planning committee, and the
6 economy down here on the coast is a big part of keeping
7 North Carolina going, and it's just not worth it. Maybe
8 later on you might have to, but I just don't agree with
9 it. I can't agree with any of it. And I came here with
10 an open mind and I've done a lot of research in this,
11 and I just cannot go along with it. And I thank you.

12 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Thank you. Tom Gale.

13 BY MR. GALE: Thank you for having me tonight.
14 I wanted to voice my concern about the proposal and
15 support Alternative C myself. As somebody that grew up
16 in Texas, when we would visit the coast, I remember
17 bringing cotton balls and alcohol to get the tarballs
18 off our feet when we stepped in those. And I think that,
19 you know, being a realtor here in town, I know that the
20 tourism industry, people relocating here for retirement
21 as well as the fishing is a big industry. All three of
22 those are very big industries for our area, and I'm
23 concerned about the economic detriment that oil
24 exploration and presumably drilling would cause as a
25 result. Thank you.

1 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Thank you. Brady Bradshaw.

2 BY MR. BRADSHAW: Thank you for having me
3 tonight. My name is Brady. I'm from -- I live in
4 Wilmington, North Carolina, and first of all, I'd like
5 to ask anybody here from out of state representing
6 especially the American Petroleum Institute to please
7 leave the room. You're not here to represent these
8 children who are our future.

9 I just want to speak from my experience as a
10 marine biology major at UNC-Wilmington. Every day, I
11 learn a lot about, you know, marine mammals and fish
12 species that live off our coast, and I want my children
13 to be able to experience the same wonders that I study
14 in school. It's amazing. We have a lot of diversity off
15 our coast, but the -- even just the exploration for oil
16 and gas threatens many species off our coast.

17 I think that our coast is somewhat like a
18 soldier coming back from the war. We have our -- around
19 400 North Atlantic Right Whales just starting to
20 recover, so this is like setting off a bomb outside of a
21 soldier's house with PTSD.

22 I don't agree with the seismic testing, and I
23 know that it permanently can damage the fishes' -- which
24 is very important for them being able to maintain their
25 homeostasis and being able to maintain balance in the

1 water. This leads to death in a lot of fish and can lead
2 to death in a lot of marine mammals.

3 I also want to point out something that I just
4 learned today. And, Mr. Goolsby, I don't know how he can
5 support -- call something clean burning natural gasses
6 which burns -- methane is 23 times as powerful as carbon
7 dioxide, which you can -- it's not clean burning. This
8 impacts our planet directly.

9 And there's this really cool algae -- that's
10 called -- and they have a calcium carbonate shell. This
11 is a primary food source for a lot of these species. You
12 can't make an environmental impact statement that points
13 out how it will impact one species. This is a fully
14 connected web of life, and -- spores are a primary
15 photosensitizer that's the base of the food web, and
16 calcium carbonate is directly impacted by ocean --
17 interferes in the formulation of calcium carbonate.

18 So with climate changes -- it's really important
19 that we take these impacts into consideration and look
20 at the full interconnectivity of the food web, not just
21 direct impacts, which are also really important.

22 I don't see any other alternative than
23 Alternative C. I think that we need a wake-up call and
24 we need to move forward right now with clean energy
25 instead of dirty drilling and loud bomb blasts in our

1 ocean. Thank you.

2 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Mary Gigliotti. I'm sorry if I
3 didn't pronounce that right.

4 BY MS. GIGLIOTTI: Hi. My name is Mary Gigliotti,
5 and I am a student at UNC-W. I am here to tell you that
6 I support Alternative C and I support Alternative C for
7 the following reasons.

8 Offshore wind development will create more
9 jobs. It will guarantee -- stay right here in the United
10 States -- the other two alternatives will be taking a
11 step backwards and -- need progress. That is why I
12 would reject Alternative A and Alternative B, and I
13 support Alternative C.

14 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Jonathan Bustle.

15 BY MR. BUSTLE: Hello. My name is Jonathan
16 Bustle, and I'm an environmental science major at UNC-W.
17 I also support Alternative C. I don't think drilling or
18 exploring for offshore oil or natural gas will benefit
19 our economy. I think the drop in gas prices would only
20 drop by around three cents over the next 20 years after
21 drilling for gas, so I really don't see this as an
22 economically feasible option. I think we need to move
23 forward with stable and green technology from now on.
24 Thank you.

25 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Nancy Cross.

1 BY MS. CROSS: Thank you for letting me speak.
2 I moved here from Fort Lauderdale, Florida July 2, 2010,
3 which is shortly after the big Gulf spill, and I was
4 devastated with that spill. It just hurt me so much. It
5 was such -- such a disaster, and there was actually some
6 oil that came on the beaches in Miami and Fort
7 Lauderdale, and we were afraid that it was going to get
8 in the Gulfstream and come all the way up the coast.

9 I definitely don't want to see any drilling off
10 this coast. It scares me. The testing scares me. I know
11 it's harmful to whales and fish and other sea creatures.
12 It just seems for too long that we have treated the
13 ocean as a giant trash bin. Look at the Pacific. It's a
14 giant trash bin. We dump all kinds of waste in it.
15 Drilling for oil, oil spills -- I've researched all the
16 oil spills we've had. There's been a lot of them.
17 There's been a lot of destruction to our ocean from the
18 drilling.

19 Another thing I discovered today was there's a
20 drilling fluid that they use when they are drilling, and
21 it's really harmful to fish and creatures in the ocean,
22 and it's something like 90,000 metric tons of drilling
23 fluid that ends up in the ocean as a result of drilling.

24 I just think it's a really bad idea. I support
25 Alternative C. I think it's our future. It's time to

1 move forward.

2 I also in my research -- there's a site,
3 dirtyenergymoney.com, and it's interesting, very
4 enlightening to look at. One of our senators has
5 received over \$1,100,000 from the dirty energy
6 companies. The other one received only about 45,000.

7 Anyway, I definitely support moving forward with
8 clean energy. Thank you.

9 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Jeanne Simonelli.

10 BY MS. SIMONELLI: I actually have a lot more
11 questions than I have comments at the moment. As I was
12 listening to your presentation, it's opened the door for
13 wondering about things like what's a minor impact really
14 mean? Is that defined in the -- in the report -- what is
15 a minor impact on fisheries, for instance? Is it a minor
16 impact where the fishing industry is concerned?

17 The report that I was looking at today talks
18 fish impact that go on for days after each test and
19 radiates out about 20 miles.

20 I also have to wonder if there are permit
21 applications out there, does that mean that the sea
22 bottom is already leased? Is it already a done deal?

23 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: No.

24 BY MS. SIMONELLI: Well, that's good to hear. So
25 I have lot more questions. I'm a researcher with the

1 Wake Forest University Center for Environment and Energy
2 Sustainability, but I'm a Wilmington resident, and
3 there's just more to find out, so I support C for the
4 time being. Thank you.

5 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Thank you. Sarah Eisler.

6 BY MS. EISLER: I'm Sara Eisler, and I'm also a
7 marine biology student at UNC-W, and obviously my
8 opposition of the seismic testing is -- and, therefore,
9 drilling off our coast stems from the inevitable damage
10 to the marine life that -- have.

11 Marine fish and mammals, as many people have
12 already mentioned, suffer a lot of damage or -- sorry.
13 They require their hearing as a main source for
14 communication and -- navigation and eating, so blasting
15 the water with airguns severely hinders their ability to
16 do these three activities that are vital for their life.

17 Also, the seismic exploration would injure,
18 according to your reports, 130 -- over 130,000 marine
19 mammals, which I don't -- that sounds like a pretty
20 major impact to me, especially since you know the Right
21 Whale has only about 400 individuals left and their
22 population and many other whales are suffering in their
23 population, so that could nearly wipe out some species
24 of whales.

25 Also, in addition, fish, as Brady mentioned,

1 have -- which is in their ear bones, which also are
2 severely damaged by the airgun testing. That sort of
3 damage will result in a major loss of jobs off our coast
4 in commercial and recreational fishing, which is a multi
5 billion dollar industry in North Carolina. And,
6 furthermore, those losses in the recreational fishing
7 and all that will also hurt diving and tourism in this
8 area. Also, after all this damage to the environment and
9 economy of North Carolina, the price of oil would also
10 drop only about three cents after -- over the next 20 or
11 30 years.

12 So the main message here is that clean energy is
13 the way forward, and numerous studies have shown that
14 offshore wind is a very valuable resource, especially in
15 our state. We have one of the highest potentials for
16 offshore wind, and it will create jobs, not threaten
17 them. It will benefit the environment, not harm it.

18 I have personally seen the opposition to this
19 sort of testing in North Carolina, and I would please
20 encourage -- guys to vote for opposition -- C. Thank
21 you.

22 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Sevi Wisner.

23 BY MR. WISNER: My name is Sevi Wisner, and I
24 just want to say stop the drilling. I don't want any
25 animals to die.

1 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Presley Wisner. Is Presley
2 here? Heidi Perotto.

3 BY MS. PEROTTO: I just wanted, first of all, to
4 say that I appreciate the work that the Bureau has done
5 on this and also, as a brand new US citizen, I
6 appreciate the opportunity to express my opinion and say
7 what's on my mind. And what is on my mind is that --
8 that I wish that I had the scientific background that
9 some of these people have here, but I don't have a
10 marine biology -- or scientific feedback for you, but I
11 do have a lot of common sense, and common sense tells me
12 that these tests that are proposed here and this
13 equipment and these processes can possibly be harmful to
14 our -- and to the marine life, the animals that live in
15 our ocean.

16 Common sense also tells me that testing -- the
17 goal of the testing is to eventually do the drilling,
18 and we do not want -- need more drilling in these
19 oceans. We do not need another oil spill. We need clean,
20 renewable energy. I think it's against every common
21 piece of common sense that I have to invest more money,
22 more resources to take the risks that are involved for
23 an energy resource that is not sustainable in our
24 future, that cannot take us into the -- that can sustain
25 our environment and -- you know, the -- the ocean and

1 the -- the world for the children that we're handing
2 this work to, so I really want to urge you to adopt
3 Alternative C and thank you.

4 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Thank you. Sherry O'Dell.

5 BY MS. O'DANIELL: O'Daniell.

6 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: O'Daniell, sorry.

7 BY MS. O'DANIELL: Hello. Yeah. My name is
8 Sherry, and I'm a mother, and also I admire all this
9 research you've done. Thank you for -- I've learned some
10 new things just from your presentation, but I feel like
11 Alternative C would be the way for us to go, and there
12 are just many reasons.

13 I know when you were doing your presentation,
14 you also addressed concerns of the other alternatives, B
15 and A, and so I question if there's so much from -- and
16 concerns about the negativity of A and B, then why
17 should we even try it? Right now, you've addressed
18 that, you know, accidents can happen and what would
19 happen if they did, but in the past, there have been
20 things that have -- we have learned later were as a
21 result of negligence. I can't say that word, sorry. And,
22 you know, I'm kind of questioning that.

23 And one -- another thing I noticed just when I
24 was sitting here, you see more mothers, grandmothers,
25 children, young people that go to college. They're all

1 looking for Alternative C, because, really, this is
2 their future. They're going to be here, and we're going
3 to long be gone before these children will really feel
4 the effects of -- you know, of the offshore drilling.

5 And I just -- and another thing that I've read
6 in your pamphlet was that other countries are leading
7 us, I believe, in offshore energy, and I question why
8 it's not the USA. Why are we lacking behind in renewable
9 energy? I mean, I always thought of the USA of -- being
10 more technological and -- than other countries, so I
11 think that we should change our way of looking at things
12 and go from the -- surveys into the future. So thank you
13 very much.

14 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Michael Hazlett.

15 BY MR. HAZLETT: Hello. My name is Michael. I
16 also go to UNC-W, studying environmental studies. I
17 graduate in just under two weeks.

18 I support Alternative C. I think it's
19 unconscionable that Alternative A has an optional -- for
20 the passive marine testing. Just imagine yourself in the
21 water as if you're a whale. It definitely, you know,
22 wouldn't feel good.

23 I think Option B falls way too short for making
24 any significant protection for marine mammals, and under
25 NEPA, you know, we should protect endangered species.

1 And there's just so much resources in the ocean
2 that we can harvest that don't disrupt the natural
3 balance of things, I think that, you know, Alternative C
4 is the only way to go in this situation, and I hope you
5 guys will support it.

6 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Paige Woodruff.

7 BY MS. WOODRUFF: Hello. That's me. I'm a North
8 Carolinian. I love the land of this state, and there's
9 nowhere in the world that I would rather live. To see
10 the North Carolina coastline up on a little map on the
11 screen terrifies me, because she's my baby. I've changed
12 my lifestyle enough so that I could say I take care of
13 her. I do everything in my power to tread lightly and
14 ask that others do the same. I am the rule, by the way,
15 not the exception.

16 I'm sick of big business, particularly oil,
17 stating that they speak on behalf of a lot of people.
18 There are more of us who want to protect the land.

19 I think it was Einstein that defined insanity as
20 doing the same thing twice and hoping to get a different
21 outcome. We've seen oil spills result from drilling. If
22 there's going to be seismic testing, make it offshore
23 wind, not drilling. Make it for offshore wind, not
24 drilling.

25 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: At this point, we will need to

1 take a ten minute rest break for the court reporter, so
2 if you haven't been called and you signed up, you will
3 be. So please come back in ten minutes and then the
4 floor will be open for an additional comment -- person
5 may not have signed up.

6 (Whereupon off the record.)

7 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: The next speaker is Keenen
8 Altic. Keenen Altic.

9 BY MR. ALTIC: Hi. I'm in support of Alternative
10 C. The other alternatives are just more of the same,
11 not -- they're not anything. They're not an alternative.
12 If you're testing for oil, you're going to be drilling
13 for oil, and after seeing what happened in the Gulf of
14 Mexico a couple years ago, I can't imagine having that
15 happen again.

16 And I also want to address the fact that natural
17 gas is not cheap at all and hydraulic fracturing --
18 there are chemicals that oil companies will not release
19 to the public what they are, and they're not going to
20 release them, because they're afraid of it coming under
21 scrutiny. What's there to be afraid of? Let's see what
22 those chemicals are. Thank you.

23 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Aaron Richardet.

24 BY MR. RICHARDET: Aaron Richardet. Yeah. I'm an
25 executive board member of Cape Fear Chapter of Surfrider

1 here representing myself, my family of 1,200 engaged
2 local Surfrider members. Cape Fear Surfrider is part of
3 an activist organization of over 250,000 members.

4 I actually want to take a little deviation from
5 what I had planned. I think it's a little sad that some
6 of our elected officials come, they can be heard, and
7 then leave at the first opportunity. They drop their
8 brainwashing comments.

9 You know, clean, natural is kind of a misused
10 terminology. Natural oil, natural coal and natural gas
11 are all natural from the earth, so there is no
12 difference. I hope that the media -- I hope the
13 Department of the Interior opens up their eyes a little
14 bit because -- the terminology.

15 Seismic testing for natural oil and gas comes at
16 a great price to the local marine life that live in our
17 coastal waters. The auditory assault from seismic
18 surveys have found to damage, kill fish eggs and larvae
19 and to impair the hearing and health of fish and marine
20 mammals, making them vulnerable to predators and leaving
21 them unable to locate prey or mates or -- communication
22 with each other. These disturbances can disrupt and
23 displace important migratory patterns, pushing marine
24 life away from suitable habitats like nurseries and
25 foraging, mating, spawning and migratory corridors.

1 In addition, seismic surveys have been
2 implicated in whale beaching and stranding incidents.
3 These same animals do not follow a calendar like you put
4 up there before. They have their own internal calendar,
5 so they don't work August 1st to November 31st.

6 The threats to marine mammals, sea turtles, fish
7 populations, archeological resources, reduction of
8 recreational fishing areas and endangerment to our
9 beaches outweigh any short-term benefits gained by the
10 G&G activities.

11 The NC coast supports a 2.6 billion dollar
12 tourism and travel industry, with over 40,000 jobs
13 locally, and 116 million dollar commercial and
14 recreational fisheries industry, with 27,000 jobs in
15 North Carolina. In North Carolina, we rely on clean and
16 healthy offshore and nearshore environments. It is our
17 business. It is our way of life.

18 As a surfer, there's a magical moment that
19 happens on the ocean's surf zones when you look over in
20 the surf lineup and you find yourself catching the same
21 very waves that a group of dolphins, the world's
22 greatest surfers, are surfing with you. They're out
23 there just like us, for pure enjoyment of the ocean's
24 waves. Once you've had this moment happen and you feel
25 this magical moment and this connection, you're changed

1 forever and you know you must protect your fellow
2 surfers and our marine animals.

3 Our ocean is one of the greatest treasures that
4 our children hold us responsible for protecting for our
5 future generations, and we, along with millions of other
6 Americans, are willing to do what it takes to protect
7 this gift.

8 The Cape Fear Surfrider Foundation urges the
9 Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to adopt Alternative
10 C, no action for oil and gas production, status quo for
11 renewable energy and marine mineral G&G activity. It's
12 the best policy for our environment and our economy.
13 Thank you.

14 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Chip Jackson.

15 BY MR. JACKSON: Good evening. My name is Chip
16 Jackson. I'm a lifelong local resident. I'm also a UNC-W
17 environmental studies graduate, glad there are some
18 other UNC-W students out here. I'm an environmental
19 scientist with 20 years of experience in real world
20 applications of what I learned in school, so I feel like
21 this, you know, has helped me to formulate a little bit
22 of what I have to say.

23 I'd like to say that I'm in support of the study
24 and I am in support of Alternative A. I'd like to be the
25 first one to be in support of Alternative A.

1 As others have not taken your guidelines and
2 diverged a little bit, I'll do so as well. Wind power
3 isn't happening right now in North Carolina due to
4 opposition. Just like what we had with outlying fields,
5 our permitted wind farms are not going into place.
6 Biodiesel -- we don't eat enough french fries for that
7 to make a difference. Ethanol is the biggest boondoggle
8 that we've got going right now. All it's done is make my
9 Corn Flakes cost more and given our vehicles less miles
10 per gallon.

11 I worked on the Gulf oil spill for five and a
12 half months. I flew over it every day for two months,
13 and I was on the ground at Ground Zero in Venice for
14 three and a half months. I saw a lot, and it was not as
15 was represented, so to be a part of the cleanup of the
16 worst spill in the United States, I bring these numbers
17 for everyone to consider. There were approximately 4.8
18 million barrels of oil that were lost in this spill over
19 a three month period. Now, considering that in the
20 United States alone, we use over 20 million barrels a
21 day, I think that we've done pretty well to have gone
22 this far without having a major spill. The spill
23 was bad, and spills will happen. Accidents happen, but
24 we put measures in place to mitigate those. So we need
25 oil. We're oil addicts. I come here tonight as a

1 confession of an addict. I'm addicted to oil, and as I
2 saw a fairly empty bike rack tonight and a full parking
3 lot, I think that most of us here fall in that category.
4 So we need something, and we do need alternatives.
5 However, at 20 million barrels a day, that probably is
6 not going to be addressed overnight. I also enjoy the
7 pharmaceuticals and the plastics that come from oil, so
8 there's many things that we're very dependent upon that
9 come from oil.

10 To be down in Louisiana while the spill was
11 going on, I can say that most of the people that I
12 encountered in Louisiana did not want the drilling
13 moratorium that was enacted by the President that was
14 wanted by the rest of us in the country. That overnight
15 put a lot of people out of jobs, and they spent two days
16 bringing people in off of rigs because they didn't have
17 a job, so really all it did was shift our dependence a
18 little more to non-domestic energy and put some more
19 people out of work.

20 So, again, if we can all come together and find
21 a better alternative, I'm all for it, but so far, at 20
22 million barrels a day, we're not getting there. Until we
23 go back to living like Indians in teepees on the hill
24 with our Victory gardens, we're all going to have an
25 impact and we all have it today, so we recycle our

1 bottles and our newspapers and think that we're really
2 doing a whole lot. It's a joke. It's a farce.

3 I am for domestic energy. I want those jobs in
4 the United States. I want them in Eastern North
5 Carolina. I also want the sand for our beaches and the
6 stable bedrock to be diagnosed where we plan to put
7 windmills, which are the other two parts of this plan
8 that are -- rationale for this study going forward.

9 Thank you for your time, and I hope that we will
10 move forward with Alternative A.

11 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Hunter Moon.

12 BY MR. MOON: I'd like to actually start with a
13 question. I was under the impression that offshore oil
14 drilling in the Atlantic Coast was banned until 2017. Is
15 that correct or incorrect?

16 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: All of the moratoria have been
17 lifted on the Atlantic by -- the Congressional
18 moratorium was lifted in 2008, and the Presidential
19 Moratorium was also lifted in 2008.

20 BY MR. MOON: All right. With that, I appreciate
21 the opportunity to speak and thank you for having us. I
22 would say as a public forum -- I am a good citizen. I
23 read the newspaper every day. I saw no notification for
24 this at all. I think that we could have had a much
25 larger -- the public here to voice their concerns or

1 have their voices heard if this had been promoted more
2 aggressively. I really found out just by happenstance.

3 I'd like to start and say that I strongly
4 support Option C for three reasons, and I'll speak very
5 briefly on those three. One, economics. As noted
6 earlier, the North Carolina tourism industry generates
7 17 billion dollars, including 1.5 billion dollars in
8 taxes on the coast. As noted earlier, again,
9 approximately three billion dollars in tourism jobs. Our
10 recreational fishing industry contributes 1.2 billion
11 dollars to our economy and has 24,000 jobs.

12 The best estimate that I could find regarding
13 jobs provided for drilling for oil from Old Dominion
14 University regarding Virginia was 2,500 jobs with
15 potentially double that in North Carolina, so you're
16 talking about 5,000 jobs max, when you've got 24,000
17 jobs involved in recreational fishing alone. So that's
18 on the economic front.

19 On the environmental front -- well, also
20 speaking economically -- environmentally, development of
21 wind capacity or wind energy in North Carolina, we do
22 have enough and it's been duly noted recently in the
23 news to -- wind energy off North Carolina's coast could
24 supply 120 percent of North Carolina's electricity
25 needs, far surpassing what oil and gas could do, natural

1 gas and oil.

2 From the Energy Information Agency, we have
3 approximately in the entire South Atlantic region a
4 three to six month supply of oil, 19 month supply of
5 natural gas, wind energy, again, more than we could use
6 in North Carolina. We could sell clean, renewable energy
7 infinitely, you know, forever. It's not a year and a
8 half. It's not three to six months. It's ongoing. It's
9 clean. The economic and environmental benefits are
10 clearly superior.

11 And the last -- the last thing I'd like to speak
12 to is ethically. I think that we have a real issue with
13 ethics -- this debate we do not have a right to spoil
14 our coast. I too have been to Louisiana, but not to
15 clean up the oil spill. I went fishing off the
16 Chandeleur Islands, and Venice is basically Ground Zero
17 from the BP oil spill, and I remember very specifically
18 not being able to look anywhere over the horizon at any
19 point in a weeklong fishing trip and not see oil rigs. I
20 think that's shameful. I think that's a horrible,
21 horrible legacy to leave to future generations. We
22 should have the wisdom and the foresight to not leave
23 that to our children.

24 North Carolina -- I am a North Carolinian. I
25 love this state. I love this coast. We do things

1 differently here. We -- we are better than that in North
2 Carolina. We owe it to the future economically,
3 environmentally and ethically. We must support clean,
4 renewable energy and certainly strongly support Option
5 C. Thank you.

6 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Bonnie Monteleone. She left.
7 Geoff Gisler.

8 BY MR. GISLER: My name is Geoff Gisler. I'm an
9 attorney with Southern Environmental Law Center --
10 thank you for coming down. North Carolina is an
11 important place in this state, in part because of our
12 geography -- Atlantic Coast -- North Carolina goes -- in
13 the crosshairs because of the flow of Gulfstream and the
14 Labrador Current, and we're right where they meet. The
15 benefit of that in North Carolina is bringing in great
16 fisheries -- created wonderful beaches, lots of tourism,
17 and those are the real things that -- for what ends up
18 being, under the best estimate, a very minor potential
19 benefit down the road.

20 The answer to our addiction is not just to sell
21 off the last thing in the house. It's to fix the
22 problem, but more -- with EIS, what struck me as --
23 between the potential harm and the mitigation measures,
24 we have this seismic testing that, as other folks have
25 mentioned, can cause great harm to marine mammals and

1 fisheries over -- over broad changes and very narrow
2 bands of areas where there might not be any seismic
3 testing there, but right up to the border there would be
4 seismic testing, and the overlapping seismic testing of
5 some of these areas have almost got to be close to black
6 at the -- the level of overlap. So the -- the potential
7 impact of this seismic testing is much greater
8 mitigation efforts made -- attempt to bring down the
9 level of harm, and so I encourage to you select
10 Alternative C.

11 While Congress may have mandated a study, they
12 didn't make it, in fact -- choice, and so Alternative C
13 allows us to move forward, protect the benefits North
14 Carolina currently receives from the coast and along the
15 Atlantic coast, but also to move forward and do the
16 testing that's necessary to -- evaluate and investigate
17 wind power and renewable resources without the harmful
18 seismic testing that is required for oil and gas. Thank
19 you.

20 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Al Meadowcroft.

21 BY MR. MEADOWCROFT: My name is Al Meadowcroft.
22 I've been a lifelong resident of the coast, the
23 Atlantic coast in New Jersey and here in North Carolina
24 for 18 years. I'm also on the board of the Cape Fear
25 Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation.

1 I just -- looking at all the things that are
2 potentially dangerous for doing seismic testing along
3 the coast, I just don't see the benefit that we would
4 get from doing it. I think there's too much damage,
5 potential damage for fishing, both recreational and
6 commercial. It's a huge industry. There's a lot of
7 people that their livelihoods depend on that, and
8 commercial and recreational fishing -- versus -- larger
9 area, and we have such a beautiful coastline here, miles
10 and miles of unspoiled, uninhabited lands that are
11 natural and that support a great deal of diverse
12 wildlife, the potential for damage is just too great,
13 and I would strongly urge you to include Alternative C.

14 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Muj Khm.

15 BY MR. KHM: How you are doing? Thank you for
16 the opportunity to speak. And I do -- like to share my
17 opinion to -- one of the other speakers said it was hard
18 to find out about this event, and I was actually -- I
19 didn't know about any of the -- Option A, B or C was,
20 but I do -- I will speak on behalf of my brother. He was
21 a United States Marine. He passed away. He was part of
22 the 2nd Battalion 8th Marine Regiment. We have been
23 living in North Carolina since he joined the Marine
24 Corps years and years ago and living in Camp Lejeune in
25 Jacksonville.

1 We -- to love the coast, and from all the
2 veterans that moved -- people from all the different
3 states, when they get out of the Marine Corps, a lot of
4 these people don't go home -- and with my brother, many
5 of his friends from New Jersey as well who joined the
6 Marine Corps, when they got out, they retired on the
7 East Coast. I mean, a lot of them moved to the Outer
8 Banks and they loved it there.

9 And I'm not necessarily for or against anything,
10 but I want to know what we're doing to prevent anything
11 like what happened in the Gulf spill from happening
12 again. And, I mean, I don't want to be ignorant about
13 anything, but I think that -- as speaking for our
14 veterans like my brother, that, you know, he loved North
15 Carolina, and even though he's not here anymore, that
16 this is definitely a place -- when we crossed the border
17 from Virginia into North Carolina, we were able to feel
18 like this is home. Thank you.

19 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: That's the end of the list of
20 folks who have signed up to speak. At this point --

21 BY MS. LEWIS: I signed up to speak.

22 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: If you did, I don't have it.
23 I'm sorry, ma'am, but you can take the opportunity now
24 to come up and speak, and we'll open the floor to folks
25 who may not be on the list.

1 BY MS. LEWIS: What happened? They forgot about
2 me. Thank you. Thank you, your brother's memory. My
3 brother serves as well with honor and pride. And I'm
4 sure all of us love North Carolina.

5 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: State your name and --

6 BY MS. LEWIS: Oh. I'm Elizabeth Lewis. I'm a
7 fellow -- and a student at Cape Fear Community College.
8 I'm also a musician.

9 All I can say is like let's set a precedence,
10 you know? Why do we have to do what people in Louisiana
11 do? You know, some gentleman said oh, everybody down
12 there loves the oil industry. They can't wait for them
13 to build -- oil rigs. You know, who cares? Who cares
14 what anybody else does? This is our state. This is where
15 we live. We can send a message. We can say no, it's not
16 good enough for North Carolina. We don't want you
17 drilling offshore. We don't want you drilling down into
18 the core of the ocean and sucking up every last drop of
19 oil that's left and then and only then we will begin to
20 consider alternative sources of energy. That's insane to
21 me.

22 You know, I grew up in the '70s and '80s, and
23 there was a little book I read when I was a little girl,
24 and it was called This is My Future. And this is not my
25 future. This is not the future that I read about when I

1 was a little girl, you know? They said we were going to
2 have solar panels on our homes and wind energy and
3 geothermal and, you know, life would be sacred and held
4 precious and our environment would be sacred and
5 precious, and I just want to see that happen.

6 You know, this our future, everybody. Let's take
7 care of ourselves and each other. Option C for you and
8 me.

9 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Is there anyone else who would
10 like to speak?

11 BY MS. HUTCHINGS: I'd like to. My name is
12 Brinkley (phonetic) Hutchings (phonetic). I live in
13 Wilmington and I have for four years now. I grew up on
14 the Gulf coast in Alabama. A week after the oil spill, I
15 flew over it with my father. We could smell it. It was
16 nauseating. You could see black and red oil covering the
17 Gulf as far as you could see. My father's been sick from
18 the oil spill. I've been sick. When I was home during
19 that time, the fumes in the air made my lungs hurt.
20 People are still sick in the Gulf, and the ecosystems
21 are still sick. Dolphins are still washing up dead, and
22 it's time change that path. It's time to switch to
23 clean, renewable energy.

24 Wind power off the North Carolina coast is a
25 really viable option, and it's time to make intelligent

1 energy choices, so I support Option C.

2 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Is there anyone else who would
3 like to make a comment?

4 BY MR. METZGER: My name is Brian Metzger
5 (phonetic). I live in Wilmington. I believe we should
6 all support Mr. Moss and say there's no option here.
7 That's all I have to say.

8 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Yes, sir.

9 BY SENATOR RABON: Thank you, Mr. Moderator. I'm
10 Senator Bill Rabon. I represent District Eight, which
11 is -- Brunswick, Pender, Columbus County. I'll soon be
12 representing part of New Hanover County, which gives me
13 the lion's share of the coast of North Carolina about
14 which we're talking.

15 I'd like to first say that you know we have
16 explored outer space -- we put man on the moon. We
17 weren't afraid to do so, and NASA has gained a lot of
18 information and various valuable scientific data from
19 that exploration. When things go bump in the night, it's
20 very important to get up and see what goes bump and to
21 not get under the covers and be afraid.

22 We have some things offshore. We don't know what
23 we have, but I'm not afraid to look at it to see what we
24 have and to see what we can do with it and see if we can
25 utilize that resource or if we can't. And when we have

1 data, we can use data driven statistics to tell us
2 whether we need to be out there or whether we don't, but
3 we -- we face a conundrum, and we need to get to the
4 bottom of it, and when we do, we'll make a decision, and
5 hopefully we'll make well-informed and proper decisions.

6 As far as North Carolina goes, the biggest
7 industry in North Carolina, ladies and gentlemen, is
8 agribusiness. It's 72 billion dollars, not 11 billion
9 dollars like tourism. Seventy-two billion dollars in
10 farmers who need to work, farmers who consume energy.
11 Most of that energy is in the form of fossil fuels. We
12 have our own. Let's take a look at it.

13 Price of gasoline today is \$4 or so a gallon.
14 Liquid propane a gallon would be 3.99 to 4.50. The price
15 a gallon of compressed natural gas, ladies and
16 gentlemen, is a dollar and 60 cents. In North Carolina
17 alone, by the year 2040, it will be 13.5 million people.
18 Twenty-five percent of those people will be my age and
19 older, that is, senior citizens. They're going to
20 require energy. They're going to require cheap energy.
21 We need to be looking at sources of cheap energy for
22 those people -- we don't need to be putting our heads in
23 the sand, scared to see what lies beneath the ocean.

24 We need to be out there looking, which leads me
25 to the conclusion and the only conclusion is the option

1 that I would support and I'm sure my colleagues in the
2 Senate are going to support very, very shortly -- come
3 out with a statement that we support Option A, and we
4 support it very strongly. I'm not scared of the dark. I
5 just want to know what's there.

6 I served with Senator Goolsby on the Energy
7 Commission for the North Carolina Senate. We worked very
8 hard. I attended every public meeting except the last
9 one. The reason I didn't attend that one, it was brought
10 up impromptu and I had another obligation. I listened to
11 what other people had to say, and I appreciate every
12 single comment that you all made, and we listened. I
13 want you to know that. We do listen, but we also have a
14 job.

15 UNIDENTIFIED WITNESS: There's only three people
16 that were for A, so you're not listening.

17 SENATOR RABON: Thank you, sir. Thank you very
18 much for your comments --

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You're very welcome.
20 What's your name again so I cannot vote for you?

21 SENATOR RABON: May I proceed --

22 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Please do, yes.

23 SENATOR RABON: Thank you. What our commission
24 has done -- and we're going to go ahead with legislation
25 in this state, because we have the Sanford basin with

1 some natural gas under it. We hope we have something
2 offshore. Time will show, I hope, depending on the
3 outcome of this. We want to draft legislation that if we
4 decide to look at these natural resources, we'll do it
5 in a safe way and that we do it in the safest way thus
6 far in the United States.

7 I know economics does not play big in the part
8 of the life of young people, and I'm glad it doesn't,
9 because if you knew what I know and if you've seen as
10 many summers and if you've seen the hard times and the
11 human suffering that I have seen, you'd be missing a big
12 part of your life -- so I applaud you for what you had
13 to say tonight and for what you've done, but I'll tell
14 you this, that the gas and oil industry in the United
15 States brings over one trillion dollars into the revenue
16 of this country annually. It -- second only to personal
17 income tax, and what comes -- running this country.
18 Think about that. Second only.

19 We can eat corn. We can eat a lot of things that
20 we can grow on the land, but we can't eat natural gas.
21 We can't eat oil, but we can use them to enhance our
22 lives, and we will use them to enhance our lives. So I
23 hope that as you grow older and your hair greys as mine
24 have, you reflect and you are happy about the way you
25 think, what you see today -- when you think about things

1 retrospectively, you will realize that we need to take
2 care of our own. We don't need to be dependent on other
3 nations. We don't need to be dependent on other
4 economies. We need to be self-sufficient and dependent
5 upon ourselves.

6 Thank you, Mr. Moderator, and thank you all for
7 coming. We appreciate your comments.

8 BY MR. KEITH: Thank you for being here in
9 Wilmington today. My name is Zachary Keith. I'm a senior
10 organizer with Oceana. It's one of the world's largest
11 ocean conservation nonprofits. We'll be submitting
12 lengthy and comprehensive scientific public comments, so
13 I'm not going to go into that, but what I am -- I'm not
14 a scientist. I'm a field organizer here in Wilmington. I
15 live in this community, and while we're making
16 political -- political -- speeches, I just want to add
17 that I think the folks who have speak -- spoken tonight
18 represent the true feelings of Wilmington and New
19 Hanover County, and really the only alternative is
20 Alternative C.

21 MR. HAZLET: I would like to just speak to the
22 issue of --

23 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: -- state your name.

24 MR. HAZLET: Michael Hazlet. I'm a student, but
25 I'm also a human, and a lot of people talked about sort

1 of the children and the future, the legacy that we're
2 leaving. And the people that are primarily profiting off
3 of the development of offshore oil and gas technology,
4 yeah, they may be natural resources, but exploiting
5 something and calling it natural, you know, isn't good
6 for the environment.

7 What sort of future are we leaving for our
8 children, you know, to profit off something and then
9 they check out of here and leave a mess in the -- the
10 wake of this? That's just like pure shameful in my
11 opinion, and I think we should be really looking for
12 alternatives like Alternative C that don't perpetuate
13 more of a problem and that really factor in what is
14 truly beneficial in this world.

15 And also to touch on the -- the number one
16 agriculture -- the number one economy in this state is
17 agriculture. We have more -- of factory pig farms than
18 anywhere else in the world. We slaughter more pigs than
19 there are the population of people in the state. If
20 that's sustainable, if that that's self-sustaining, all
21 that goes into the New Hanover rivers and that all goes
22 into our water quality. Everything's connected.

23 Seismic testing, drilling for oil, it's just
24 laying the groundwork for more of the same. And for the
25 future of our -- the world, for children, we should

1 definitely support Alternative C and we shouldn't let
2 people that are profiting continue to at the expense of
3 everybody else.

4 BY MS. GALES: My name is Bev Gales, (phonetic)
5 and I'm going to address something here with the
6 agriculture aspect. I know that agriculture is a big
7 business in North Carolina. I'm a farmer's daughter, and
8 I'm collateral damage. We could do far better with our
9 farms if we used less petroleum, sprayed less
10 pesticides, used IPM programs with our farms instead of
11 use the spray all the time -- tractors and all the
12 things that it does to it. So we could dramatically cut
13 our oil costs down if we get wise, if we were farming
14 more wisely.

15 There was -- there was a time when the person
16 who manufactured the wagon wheel had to retool and learn
17 a new job, and I think it's time that everybody in the
18 oil industry learns a new job and we go for -- for
19 Option C.

20 BY MS. DEAN: Hello. My name is Liza Dean, and
21 I'm a native Wilmingtonian and a third and fourth grade
22 school teacher here at the Friends School of Wilmington,
23 and I would like to speak in favor of Alternative C.

24 I feel like Alternative A is just reckless, and
25 I'm not sure of the physical difference between A and B,

1 but I feel like probably with Alternative B not only in
2 just doing it, but with the -- the passive acoustic
3 monitoring, I'm confused as to how it will be -- would
4 stop if a whale was in the area and how you make those
5 sort of concrete regulations as to how long you would
6 wait until they would resume seismic activities. I feel
7 like there's just too much room for error, and people
8 would -- obviously being paid, so it seems like a loss
9 of money to -- to wait for a whale to clear out of the
10 area, so it just doesn't seem like it's enough safety
11 precautions in that area.

12 So I'm in favor of Alternative C. Thank you.

13 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Anyone else? Okay.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can I say something real
15 quick?

16 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Yes, sir.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- as a fellow old guy, I
18 think we should not be the ones to screw up the coast.
19 Let the younger people do it.

20 BY MS. O'DANIELL: Hi. I'm Sherry O'Daniell,
21 and I was listening to someone that said when you --
22 an older person like me. Well, I guess I'm kind of older
23 than most of you, but I think that's what we have to
24 look at. We have to look at -- we hope that as children
25 will get older and they'll be healthy, you know, like --

1 where I grew up in the farming industry, it's one of the
2 highest cancer areas, and I lost a lot of friends.

3 But everyone keeps on saying that we had to
4 drive our cars here, we had -- we have oil in our cars,
5 we use oil for this and that. It's true, but I think we
6 need to be more innovative -- the rest of the world
7 is -- and not to be looking at because in the past we
8 relied so much on oil, we need to in the future. But we
9 don't need to keep on in the past. We need to go forward
10 and to use something that's less invasive and get away
11 from oil. You know, it's time to make a change.

12 I'd love to have one of those new cars that just
13 uses batteries. I don't want to depend on oil. I really
14 don't, but right now, I don't have a choice. Thank you.

15 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Is that it? As I had mentioned
16 earlier, the comment period closes on May 30th. If you
17 wish to make a comment and you don't have -- the
18 literature on the way in, please grab it on the way
19 out -- report to you how you -- how to send comments to
20 us, the various measures to do that. And with that, I
21 will close the meeting.

22

23

24 (Whereupon, the hearing was concluded at 8:57 p.m.)

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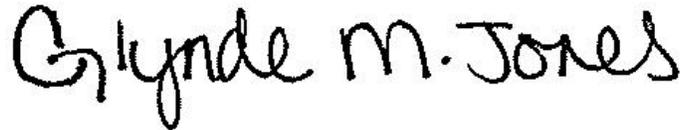
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CERTIFICATE

I, Glynde M. Jones, a Notary Public in and for the State of North Carolina, do hereby certify that the proceedings were reduced to typewriting under my direction and are a true record of the proceedings.

I further certify that I am neither attorney or counsel for, nor related to or employed by, any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto or financially interested in the action.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereto set my hand and seal.



GLYNDE M. JONES, NOTARY PUBLIC
Notary Public Number: 20022120063

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