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4 BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT

5 Public Meeting

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7 Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement

8 Proposed Geological and Geophysical Activities

9 in the Mid and South Atlantic OCS Planning Areas

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11 April 26, 2012, 1:04 p.m.

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21 Hilton Wilmington Riverside

22 301 North Water Street

23 Wilmington, North Carolina 28401

24 Session reported by: Glynde M. Jones

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1 BY MR. GOEKE: My name is Gary Goeke. I'm the
2 chief of the Environmental Assessment Section with the
3 Bureau of Ocean Energy Management in New Orleans.
4 Sitting go to my right this afternoon is Doctor Tom
5 Bjerstedt. Tom is the project manager for the EIS that
6 we're here to discuss this afternoon, and so what we're
7 going to do, we wanted to -- we appreciate all of you
8 showing up. This is a very good turnout. First things
9 first, bathrooms are out -- down the hall to your left
10 just beyond the stairway, emergency exits here and out
11 in the hallway.

12 And if there are no general questions about how
13 we're going to run the program tonight, I want to give
14 you just a little bit of background. We have created an
15 environmental document that looks at geological,
16 geophysical data collection techniques that may or may
17 not be permitted in the Atlantic Ocean. Tom will go into
18 much greater detail. What we are doing here is creating
19 an administrative record so that we have legal support,
20 legal documentation which will back up our documents as
21 we move through our process.

22 What we would appreciate from all of you this
23 afternoon is to try and keep comments focused on the
24 proposed action. The proposed action is the collection
25 of geological, geophysical data offshore. Again, it may

1 or may not happen. This EIS that we're looking at and
2 that we're discussing this afternoon does not allow
3 anything to happen unless there will be additional
4 environmental work done to evaluate potential effects of
5 these permits, of these -- of the project that we're
6 talking about. This is a programmatic document, which
7 means it's sort of an overview of the potential impact
8 that -- that these different types of processes may have
9 in common.

10 Given that brief background, again, if you can
11 keep your comments focused on what we're -- what we're
12 here for this afternoon, geological and geophysical data
13 interpretation, it helps our -- it helps create our
14 administrative record, helps create a stronger document.

15 Tom Bjerstedt.

16 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Good afternoon. Can people
17 hear me?

18 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Yes.

19 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: I am the NEPA coordinator.
20 NEPA is an acronym that stands for the National
21 Environmental Policy Act. The coordinators of the
22 document which involves the work by our Bureau
23 scientists and also our contractors that we engage to
24 carry out the noise in the sea modeling that's an
25 important part of the environmental impact statement --

1 I was the contracting officer's representative for that
2 contract. For the -- that work was carried out by CSA
3 International, Incorporated based in Stuart, Florida.

4 What I'll talk to you about now is give you an
5 overview for the document before we open the floor to
6 comments from folks -- this is a public meeting schedule
7 that we have laid out for this environmental review. You
8 can see that it's a two week period of time. Today we
9 have two groups in the field. We have a meeting like
10 this going on in Wilmington, Delaware while we're here
11 today in Wilmington, North Carolina. So by the end of
12 the week, we will have visited all of these places to
13 receive comments from people like yourself that we use
14 in the process to revise the document from a draft into
15 a final.

16 The purpose of the meeting today is to report
17 that we've prepared the draft. We have distributed it.
18 It's available on our website. The information materials
19 that you've picked up coming in reports where you can --
20 you can download it or just pick up the document, take a
21 look at it. It was published -- notice of its
22 availability was published in the Federal Register on
23 March 30th, and it's open for a 60 day comment period
24 from March 30, closes May 30th.

25 We're here to collect your oral testimony or

1 anything in writing you wish to submit that we would --
2 help us prepare our final draft from this -- final
3 version from this draft. And I mentioned the National
4 Environmental Policy Act. It's an important process to
5 receive public input on draft documents, because that
6 law, NEPA, is really the Magna Carta for the Federal
7 government in imposing decisions that it's going to be
8 making to -- a thorough and studied review before the
9 decisions are made. And part of that review is the
10 analysis by experts, but it's also input from state and
11 Federal agencies and people like yourself who have an
12 interest in the outcome of the decision.

13 The purpose of the document is to assess a
14 potential environmental impact of geological and
15 geophysical techniques in the Mid and South Atlantic
16 Outer Continental Shelf. We've evaluated the activity
17 level based on permit applications that the Bureau has
18 received since about 2009 for permits in this area.
19 We've been holding them in abeyance because we don't
20 have a review like this that we've carried out in this
21 area that was oil and gas leasing and seismic activity
22 that was carried out in these -- in the late '70s and
23 early 1980s, but nothing since then.

24 The EIS ultimately will be used by our agency to
25 make a decision by the Secretary of the Interior and

1 also for other agencies that have responsibilities under
2 environmental law. They will use the analysis that's in
3 it that's part of it for their decision that they have
4 to make for the resources they are responsible for.

5 The proposed action here is to authorize
6 geological and geophysical activities that are needed to
7 support the three areas that the Bureau of Ocean Energy
8 Management manages. They would be oil and gas, renewable
9 energy and marine minerals, generally sand that's used
10 for onshore coastal restoration or beach -- nourishment.

11 On this slide here, you can see the South
12 Atlantic planning area, this large tract, and the
13 Mid-Atlantic planning area. These are the boundaries
14 that have been established. This line here -- this line
15 here -- this line here is the edge of the exclusive
16 economic zone for the United States of America, extends
17 out from shore 200 nautical miles. All of these waters
18 and seabeds inshore from that line belong to the United
19 States.

20 In -- on this map of this scale, you won't see
21 that the state waters here extend out from shore to
22 three nautical miles, and all of the states have state
23 waters extending out for that distance. This line here a
24 little less distinct is 350 nautical miles, and it is
25 the edge of the extended Continental Shelf Under the

1 United Nations convention of the Law of the Sea. There
2 are means by which the United States could lay claim to
3 this area between 200 and 350 nautical miles. It has not
4 yet done that, but we are including this area in our
5 evaluation if and when the United States decides to
6 pursue this region being exclusive territorial waters
7 for the country.

8 The types of activities that are involved --
9 geological activities involve a coring -- shallow test
10 drilling. Shallow test drilling is less than 500 feet
11 deep with -- stratigraphic tests are deeper than 500
12 feet. These are wells that are drilled to exam the
13 stratigraphic layering of the rock there. They're not
14 exploration wells, and if anything is discovered, you
15 cannot produce from it, because there's -- there's no
16 lease that's involved. You cannot produce oil or gas
17 without a lease on Federal land.

18 Geophysical activities involves two and
19 three-dimensional seismic surveying that involves the
20 use of airguns. Another technique is controlled source
21 and electromagnetic surveys. That's a industry technique
22 to examine the gas and fluid content for rocks at depth.
23 High-resolution geophysical surveys are geoengineering
24 in nature. They're used for preplanning, the
25 installation of structures on the bottom of the sea to

1 examine geoengineering properties, the strength of the
2 sediment, whether you have falls, whether you have gas
3 pockets, things of that nature.

4 Multibeam echosounders are used to establish --
5 sidescan sonar is used for examining the nature of the
6 bottom, whether you have hard bottom conditions or you
7 have a sea wreck -- shipwreck, for example.

8 Also at issue would be gravity and magnetic
9 surveys that are -- that tend to be run at the same time
10 that seismic surveys are run. Impact-producing factors
11 are a term of art in NEPA, National Environmental Policy
12 Act, that talks about -- or that refer to stresses on
13 the environment for the proposed actions. You have
14 routine operations. These would be the things that you
15 could predict based on the nature of the techniques that
16 are involved, seismic airguns, for example, and the
17 electromechanical sound sources that I mentioned on the
18 previous slide.

19 Aircraft noise and traffic refers to the support
20 services that onshore operators provide to ships that
21 are working offshore. These large boats require crew
22 changes. They require certain types of equipment that
23 have to be sent out, and we examine that as an impacting
24 factor as well.

25 Drilling and coring involve operational waste.

1 When you drill into the seabed, you pull up rock
2 cuttings that tend to be discharged on the surface of
3 the sea -- the surface of the seabeds. Seafloor
4 disturbances, that would be any touching of the bottom,
5 bottom sampling, drilling and coring, placement of
6 anchors, cables and -- sensors.

7 (Whereupon off the record.)

8 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: It's a bit distracting, but
9 I'll carry on.

10 The onshore base support are activities that are
11 conducted on land that are necessary to support activity
12 on the ocean. For example, boats have a place that they
13 berth. They have a place that they obtain supplies from,
14 and, of course, people -- working on the ocean, they
15 have to live somewhere on land, so that's an aspect of
16 onshore activity that's supporting offshore work.

17 Traffic and noise by vessels, exclusion zones that
18 are necessary for safety or for observation of
19 endangered species -- and also ships generate waste when
20 they're on the ocean and trash, and debris either by the
21 ships themselves or as a consequence of the operation --
22 any operation on the water has to be aware of trash and
23 debris.

24 Accidental events are those things that are
25 accidental. They're -- in our case -- we're talking

1 about ships on the water. We are talking about accidents
2 that could take place where some fuel could spill on the
3 water or into the ocean, and we're -- we're not talking
4 about producing oil and gas. We're not talking about
5 pipelines. We're not talking about anchors. So we're not
6 talking about oil spills. We're just talking about
7 this -- activities and an accident that could result
8 from it, which would be a small fuel spill from a
9 vessel.

10 The resources -- we looked at benthic
11 communities, fish and fisheries, marine mammals, sea
12 turtles, coastal and marine birds and protected species
13 that are a part of many of these populations.

14 The socioeconomic issues would include
15 archaeological resources. The Atlantic seaboard is an
16 area of intense historical activities with -- with
17 humans, lots of shipwrecks that are -- that are out
18 there. Marine protected areas can refer to areas
19 designated under law or a national marine sanctuary.
20 In the Mid-Atlantic, we have the Monitor National Marine
21 Sanctuary, and in the South Atlantic, we have Gray's
22 Reef that's been designated. These are special places
23 that have been designated in law that we have to account
24 for in our evaluation.

25 Human resources and land uses I mentioned, and

1 other marine uses would be the large military components
2 that tend to use the surface of the water and below
3 surface -- range complexes that are off the Mid-Atlantic
4 and the South Atlantic, virtually the entire seaboard
5 has military range complexes there. We -- we have to
6 analyze all our activity in the context of those already
7 authorized activities.

8 The heart and soul of an environmental impact
9 statement are the alternatives that are created that are
10 part of the evaluation. For -- for our -- our EIS, we --
11 we have alternatives. We constructed them based on
12 existing regulations that the National Oceanographic and
13 Atmospheric Administration has designated along the East
14 Coast for the protection of the Northern Right Whale
15 during certain times of the year that they transit
16 through these areas. NOAA has recognized vessel speed
17 restrictions in certain parts of the Atlantic seaboard
18 area. I'll show you a map for that.

19 What we're saying for Alternative A is that
20 during the periods of the time that National Marine
21 Fisheries recognizes vessel speed to be reduced that we
22 would restrict airgun activity from those same areas.

23 And also a component for Alternative A would be
24 the protective measures that have been used to --
25 develop in the Gulf of Mexico over many years of

1 practice. They involve the procedures for starting a
2 survey or conducting a survey and under what conditions
3 a survey would be terminated. We have vessel strike
4 avoidance. We have guidance. We have marine
5 protecting -- marine observers that are authorized and
6 trained to be observing marine mammals on the ocean that
7 are constantly watching while surveys take place. Also
8 marine trash and vessel -- trash and debris awareness is
9 a component of the guidance that we use in the Gulf of
10 Mexico.

11 What we're saying for Alternative A, we
12 incorporate these areas that are under known regulations
13 and also include the protective measures that have been
14 recognized and used in the Gulf of Mexico. In some
15 cases, there are some modifications that are required,
16 and they are explained in the document.

17 For Alternative B would be -- a philosophy for
18 it is that we take all of these protective measures for
19 Alternative A, incorporate them into B, but also expand
20 some of these marine protected areas. These time/area
21 closures is what we would call them. I will be referring
22 to them that way as I proceed -- or to add additional
23 types of mitigation to the standard mitigations that we
24 use in the Gulf of Mexico, expanded time/area closures
25 for the Northern Right Whale, a closure area for the

1 nesting sea turtles off of Central Florida, separation
2 between simultaneous seismic surveys, which is not part
3 of Alternative A, and for Alternative B, required
4 passive acoustic monitoring.

5 This is a technique that employs sensitive
6 hydrophones in the ocean to listen for the
7 characteristic sounds of marine mammals underwater. If
8 you have marine mammals at the surface, you can see them
9 by observers on a boat, but if they're underwater, you
10 don't really know if they're there. This is a technique
11 that would -- your chances of understanding or knowing
12 whether marine mammals might be in the area.

13 Alternative C is a requirement from -- for a
14 environmental impact statement. It's a no action
15 alternative. It simply says there's a proposed action.
16 Now, what if that proposed action doesn't take place?
17 What are the environmental impacts from that decision?
18 And for -- for us, since we have no oil and gas activity
19 in the Atlantic and we have not had -- for a very long
20 time, we've constructed Alternative C to be a no action
21 alternative, meaning that we wouldn't allow any activity
22 of that -- of this nature in the area for -- for seismic
23 testing, G&G activities.

24 For the renewable energy and marine minerals
25 programs, since these are already authorized under

1 current regulation or statute, we would say they can
2 proceed because they can come to us now with an
3 application or request for a lease for renewable energy
4 project and we would process it. So the nature of
5 Alternative C is examining whether something that hasn't
6 happened in this area is allowed to go forward as
7 opposed to stopping something that's already authorized.
8 That's how we constructed this particular alternative.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Sir, can I ask a quick
10 question as a point of clarification?

11 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: If it's a short, informational
12 question, yes.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You mentioned that
14 Alternative A, that those restrictions would only be for
15 airgun surveys.

16 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Yes.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- does Alternative A not
18 apply to high-resolution geophysics?

19 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Alternative A, the closure
20 areas do not apply for high-resolution geophysics, no.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: There would be no
22 scheduled closures for high-resolution geophysics?

23 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: No.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. Appreciate that.

25 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: This area here offshore,

1 the -- Jacksonville to New Hampshire is the critical
2 habitat for the Northern Right Whale. It extends down
3 the coast of Florida to the other boundaries of the
4 South Atlantic planning area designated by NOAA.

5 Critical habitat is a special place that's
6 important for the viability of the species, and for the
7 Northern Rights, like many whales, they summer over New
8 England states, and during the course of the year, they
9 migrate down the shoreline into this area and they tend
10 to have their calves and -- and -- and feed their --
11 their calves there. Then they come back to the northern
12 area as the course of the year progresses.

13 These areas that are identified with color here,
14 this orange one is the southeastern seasonal management
15 area that NOAA has recognized in their vessel speed
16 restriction regulation. And in yellow is the
17 Mid-Atlantic seasonal management area recognized by
18 NOAA. You can see where they -- these tend to be areas
19 where the whales are concentrated in their migration.
20 There are whales through the whole area, but they
21 concentrate along the shoreline generally in a belt that
22 extends from shore up to 20 nautical miles. That's where
23 they concentrate.

24 The areas that have these small cuspid colors
25 are offshore major estuaries or bays that have a lot of

1 vessel traffic, so NOAA is saying during this period of
2 time where there might be a high probability of whales
3 transiting through the area, slow down.

4 What we're saying for Alternative A is that --
5 no airguns in these regions during these periods of
6 time. For Alternative B, I mentioned that we expanded
7 some of these area closures to the south of the
8 southeastern seasonal management area. This band from
9 shore out to 20 nautical miles -- also we filled in the
10 areas that are discontinuous along the coast here, so in
11 effect, what Alternative B is proposing is to have a
12 continuous band from Delaware Bay all the way down the
13 shoreline, 20 miles from shore all the way to 20 miles
14 out to Cape Canaveral that would be restricted from
15 airguns during those times of the year that are shown on
16 the map.

17 For Alternative B, we also recognize that
18 offshore Cape Canaveral is a well-used area for
19 Leatherback and Loggerhead sea turtles. They come
20 ashore, lay their eggs. There are tens of thousands of
21 nests that are reported from these areas by observers,
22 and we're saying that this band from shore off to ten
23 nautical miles, those airgun act -- activity in this
24 area during the period of time that these turtles are
25 coming ashore, laying their eggs and as their hatchlings

1 are emerging from the sand and working their way
2 offshore.

3 What you'll see in the document, if you open up
4 Chapter Two and look at Table 2-2, this is a good way to
5 see a roll up of the evaluation that we've done. What
6 you'll see on the table, this is just a sampling -- all
7 of our effective resources along the left hand margin
8 and the impacting factors that correspond to them, and
9 then Alternative A across the top -- and what you've got
10 here is a matrix that uses what we call significant
11 criteria that are qualitative descriptors for a level of
12 impact for that particular resource for that particular
13 impacting factor. They range from negligible, minor,
14 moderate and major. Those are all defined in the early
15 sections of Chapter Four exactly what those words mean.
16 We can't -- we can't place a quantitative limit on them,
17 but we try to define them as best we can qualitatively.

18 All of the resources that we've looked at for
19 evaluation, none of them for any impacting factor
20 reaches a level of major. It's something less for all of
21 them. It's either moderate or something less, and many,
22 many of them are negligible.

23 While an EIS is in progress, we conduct
24 consultations that are required by environmental law,
25 which would be Endangered Species Act. We have

1 consultations with Fish and Wildlife Service. We have
2 Marine Mammals Protection Act, in consultation with NOAA
3 Fisheries about that, and these are conducted in
4 parallels, and they'll -- if all works well, they intend
5 to be finished by the time the EIS is done. They are
6 beginning at this point, now that we have a draft EIS on
7 the street. We can begin these consultations.

8 The next step in -- showing you on the bar graph
9 are -- are comment periods in April and May. Following
10 that, we'll take comments from everyone that we
11 received -- people like yourself. Federal and state
12 agencies can revise the document. We use comments to
13 constructively modify what we propose, because all the
14 time, good ideas can come from anywhere. We'll revise
15 the document and prepare some recommendations for
16 management -- are mentioned that the consultations are
17 taking place all the while that the EIS is being
18 finalized, and at the end of it, we have a record of
19 decision. That is a bulletin in the Federal Register
20 that reports what is the decision based on this
21 environmental analysis that has been done. We're
22 planning on having that done before the end of -- of
23 this year, in December.

24 I mentioned that the comment period closes on
25 May 30th. We can receive your oral comments here, oral

1 testimony or anything in writing that you wish to
2 provide. We have a dedicated e-mail address,
3 ggeis@boem.gov. You can send comments to us in that way.
4 A draft of the EIS is available on our website, and the
5 materials that you've collected coming in reported where
6 you can go to find that. If you want to send us comments
7 by US post, you can -- an address there which is also on
8 the materials that are available outside on the desk.

9 And in closing, I would mention that we've spent
10 more than a year preparing this evaluation, and just so
11 there's objective evidence that it exists, there's two
12 volumes right here. It involves some state of the
13 practice modeling for the noise in the sea caused by
14 this instrumentation, airguns electromagnetic --
15 electromechanical sources, and it can be rather
16 complicated.

17 What we ask of folks who wish to make comments
18 is to take a look at it and formulate your own opinion
19 as to what you -- what you believe and what you think --
20 that we've done here, because ultimately this will be a
21 decision document for the Secretary of the Interior to
22 use to decide what we're proposing here.

23 The last thing I would mention is that the --
24 this evaluation was directed by the Congress in --
25 appropriation language in 2010. Because we had permit

1 applications in hand from industry and no way to process
2 them, the Congress told us and authorized us to conduct
3 this evaluation. So it's rather -- it's a directed study
4 directly from -- Congress, so I probably should have
5 mentioned that early on, but it's important to know it's
6 not something that we just decided to do. It's something
7 that we were directed to do because industry has
8 expressed interest in the area based on the permits that
9 we have been receiving.

10 And with that -- with that, I'll have -- will
11 open the floor to comments, but before I do, I want to
12 state some guidelines for fairness. Our goal is to allow
13 comments from everyone who is here who signed up to
14 speak until we're done today. Federal or state
15 representatives and other elected or appointed officials
16 will speak first with no restrictions. We ask the
17 members of the public to police themselves to a limit of
18 three minutes.

19 When all who wish to speak have spoken, we will
20 open the floor again for people who wish to amend their
21 comments or people who haven't signed up that want to
22 say whatever they want to say.

23 We're here to receive comments on the draft
24 document. If you comment on anything else, it's really
25 not serving our purpose in being here to help us revise

1 this document. We ask that people that make comments
2 address the folks at the front of the room, address us
3 as opposed to addressing other people in the audience,
4 and if you are speaking form notes, the court reporter
5 would appreciate a copy of your notes, or if you can
6 just -- when you're finished, if you can give them to
7 the court reporter, it will help her make sure she has
8 an accurate record of what's happened here today.

9 And with these guidelines, I can call the first
10 speaker, Newer Hanover County Commissioner Jason
11 Thompson.

12 (Whereupon off the record.)

13 BY COMMISSIONER THOMPSON: -- thank you for
14 allowing me to speak. I am Jason Thompson, local elected
15 official. I'm currently New Hanover County Commissioner.
16 I served two terms as a Wilmington Council member.

17 I prepared my comments. I don't want to miss
18 anything, so I'm going to read -- thank you for this
19 opportunity to speak today. I'm here to represent the
20 interests of my community and to publicly support the
21 proposal to conduct seismic studies of the Atlantic
22 Continental Shelf --

23 (Whereupon off the record.)

24 BY COMMISSIONER THOMPSON: I am here to
25 represent -- this is a long overdue activity that is

1 also an important step forward to developing our
2 domestic oil and natural gas resources.

3 Energy development is a proven economic
4 generator that will also increase our nation's energy
5 security. Current estimates of the Atlantic OCS offshore
6 resources are 3.3 billion barrels of oil and 31.3
7 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. These estimates,
8 however, are over 20 years old. They're derived using
9 antiquated technology. I was in elementary school when
10 some of this data was collected. These estimates,
11 however, don't change the facts.

12 New technology to analyze, explore and produce
13 oil and natural gas will increase the amount that we can
14 recover, and, therefore, the energy to supply our
15 growing demands will improve.

16 North Carolina is a state whose economy is
17 driven by agriculture, aerospace, technical markets,
18 research and tourism, and as such, oil and natural gas
19 will help North Carolina's industrial transportation and
20 distribution. It'll power factories and offices that are
21 used as a feedstock for thousands of products which are
22 integral to North Carolina businesses, including
23 computers, plastic, composite materials and fertilizers.

24 Increasing domestic production of oil and
25 natural gas would provide North Carolina's economy with

1 stable, reliable sources of energy. Atlantic OCS
2 exploration and development would also have significant
3 positive effects on our state's economy by bringing new
4 jobs and new revenue.

5 According to a recent -- study, opening up
6 Atlantic offshore areas that are currently unavailable
7 could bring more than 35,000 jobs to North Carolina.
8 These jobs would not be limited to oil and natural gas
9 production -- oil and natural gas development but jobs
10 created indirectly by those companies that supply
11 equipment and other support services both offshore and
12 onshore as well as to construct the infrastructure
13 required to drill offshore.

14 In addition, offshore development could generate
15 much needed revenue to fund critical services, including
16 roads, environmental conservation and education --
17 according to a -- study, nearly four billion dollars in
18 revenue -- four billion dollars in revenue could be
19 generated for North Carolina for 2012 -- 2030 if
20 offshore development were allowed to take place in areas
21 that are currently off limits.

22 It's evident that oil and natural gas
23 development is beneficial to our nations and to our
24 state, but we need to begin now. We need to understand
25 that resources that are available -- but more

1 importantly, we need to begin leasing the land for
2 further exploration and development. The Federal
3 government is currently indicating that leasing in the
4 Atlantic OCS will not be possible until we have more
5 data on potential resources. This will be a major
6 roadblock to the entire process, because without leases,
7 companies -- companies would not be able to explore --
8 for and develop these valuable offshore
9 resources, stymying the benefits additional energy, jobs
10 and revenue that offshore oil and natural gas
11 developments will bring.

12 Thank you again for the opportunity to comment,
13 and please allow the seismic studies to move forward as
14 soon as possible and advance the leasing process on the
15 Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf so our nation can
16 strengthen our energy and economic security. I
17 appreciate your time. Thank you.

18 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Thank you. Robert Greer.

19 BY MR. GREER: Thank you. My name is Robert
20 Greer. I'm not an elected official. However, I was a
21 county commissioner in this county for 21 years up until
22 about a year ago -- lifelong resident, owned a small
23 business for a number of years, enjoys the water, enjoys
24 the environment, but I as an individual am tired of us
25 being held hostage for our energy needs.

1 I think it's imperative that we move forward
2 with this exploration at least to see what we have. I
3 think if we can find out these resources and then
4 possibly use them, our demand and cost of energy will go
5 down just when they do that.

6 I have a small boat, 115 horsepower motor on it.
7 Right now, to fill up the gas tank, it's about \$300. I
8 used to enjoy fishing a lot. I have fished a lot. I now
9 enjoy taking my grandchildren out, enjoy the water, but
10 at \$300, it gets pretty expensive, so you can imagine
11 what -- the economic effect that has on our region if
12 people can't even afford to put gas in their cars to get
13 here, people -- I think twice when I go out to eat now.
14 I used to say well, now it's going to cost X dollars to
15 buy a meal. Now I figure in the cost of the gasoline.
16 The gasoline -- it cost me \$8 to come here today just to
17 speak, so I think it's imperative that we -- that we get
18 a handle on this.

19 We think about the revenue that can be
20 generated. As a county commissioner, we would rely -- we
21 would -- the state would be hard up for money if they
22 would put that responsibility on the local government.
23 We would be responsible. They put more responsibilities
24 on -- on local government without the dollars. With the
25 royalties from gas, from all the jobs that are created,

1 I think it's a -- it's a no -- a no-brainer to do this,
2 and I strongly support it and hope you certainly move
3 forward with haste to get it done.

4 Thank you for allowing me to speak.

5 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Before I call the next
6 speaker, may I ask that folks don't demonstrate and
7 clap? The reason for that is that it might intimidate
8 people who may wish to speak and might not speak
9 otherwise.

10 Bill Kopp.

11 BY MR. KOPP: Thank you for being here today and
12 having me to speak. My name is Bill Kopp, and I'm a
13 lifelong resident of this area. I have been an elected
14 official, but I am not today.

15 I'm here today to represent my nine
16 grandchildren. If we do not start today exploring our
17 natural resources, we are going to be behind the eight
18 ball for our future. As the speaker just said, I am
19 tired of depending on foreign countries to supply our
20 needs. We need to use our own natural resources.

21 I do not represent big oil, big business or big
22 anything, but I know that knowledge is powerful. These
23 studies, once they are completed, will give us the
24 opportunity to determine if we can use our natural
25 resources, and only then can we have that intelligent

1 discussion.

2 Thank you for letting me speak.

3 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Jason Thompson.

4 BY COMMISSIONER THOMPSON: You want me to go
5 again?

6 (Whereupon off the record.)

7 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Tom Neugebauer.

8 (Whereupon off the record.)

9 BY MR. NEUGEBAUER: Thank you. Good afternoon.
10 I timed this, and it was five minutes, so I'll -- I'll
11 trim it back as I -- I read through it.

12 But good afternoon. My name is Tom Neugebauer,
13 and I am with TGS-NOPEC Geophysical Company and here
14 today representing the International Association of
15 Geophysical Contractors, the IAGC. And the IAGC is the
16 international trade organization that represents the
17 industry that provides geophysical services and energy
18 to the energy industry, including both conventional and
19 renewable energy sectors. And as pointed out by -- by
20 the BOEM, the IAGC members have expressed interest in
21 conducting geophysical activities on the Atlantic OCS.

22 So someone, you know, would say why the need
23 for this geophysical data -- geophysical data.

24 Geophysical surveys are key tools used in oil and
25 natural gas exploration and also with the siting of

1 renewable energy facilities. Geophysical data is
2 critical to the successful discovery and efficient
3 development and production of oil and natural gas.

4 When applied early in the exploration process,
5 geophysical data aids exploration and production
6 companies in focusing their analysis and illuminates the
7 most prospective areas for future oil and natural gas
8 exploration. This also allows for the elimination of --
9 of areas that are unlikely to be prospective.

10 Geophysical data is also critical for the
11 development of renewable energy, providing important key
12 data required to site renewable energy facilities and
13 design a foundation of structure that will be required
14 for the development of renewable energy.

15 Advancements over the last ten years in data
16 acquisition and processing technology have resulted in
17 fewer dry holes and a smaller exploration, development
18 and production footprint. I have with me today seismic
19 data examples that illustrate the advance in seismic
20 acquisition since 2000. The majority of the Atlantic OCS
21 seismic database was acquired during the mid '60s to
22 late '70s.

23 Regarding the position of the IAGC and the
24 draft PEIS, of the three alternatives listed, IAGC
25 supports Alternative A, the proposed action which allows

1 the greatest coverage using deep penetrating seismic and
2 includes seasonal closure areas for the Right Whale. We
3 do not support a 40 kilometer separational distance
4 between simultaneous seismic operations which is
5 included in the mitigation measures proposed as part of
6 Alternative B.

7 Notwithstanding that geological and geophysical
8 permits recently approved in the Western and Central
9 planning areas of the Gulf of Mexico include this
10 mitigation measure as a condition of permit approval, it
11 was not developed, however, using any scientific or
12 anecdotal evidence.

13 We believe the PEIS should also be expanded to
14 include the North Atlantic planning zone -- planning
15 area. Exploration and production companies need
16 geophysical data that would be used to tie past and
17 current production data from offshore Nova Scotia to the
18 US Atlantic basins. Without this new data, there will be
19 a very significant gap in the regional work that
20 exploration and production companies will want to
21 perform.

22 The incremental cost and time to extend the PEIS
23 to the North Atlantic planning area would be minimal and
24 would allow for geophysical data acquisition to occur
25 for renewable energy siting requirements as well as when

1 this area is finally considered for natural gas and oil
2 exploration and production.

3 If the North Atlantic planning area is not
4 included, we encourage BOEM to conduct individual,
5 project-specific environmental assessments as needed
6 that will allow geological and geophysical operations to
7 take place.

8 Lastly, each of the G&G permit applications
9 currently on file with BOEM are for the purpose of
10 acquiring non-exclusive seismic data which would be
11 licensed to exploration and production companies as they
12 develop a better understanding of the hydrocarbon
13 resource potential in preparation of pending lease
14 sales.

15 Although the Atlantic PEIS will pave the way for
16 future seismic activity in an area of great interest
17 with the exploration and production companies, without
18 any planned leasing in next five years, the likelihood
19 of seismic contractors investing in non-exclusive
20 seismic data, seismic acquisition is very uncertain.

21 In meeting environmental challenges, our
22 industry conducts operations globally in a variety of
23 environments. In particular, the geophysical industry
24 has 50 years of experience in the US Gulf of Mexico OCS
25 and 40 years of experience in the US Arctic OCS. During

1 that time, there has been no scientifically supported
2 evidence that routine seismic surveys result in
3 population level impacts for any marine mammal species.

4 Our industry routinely employs operational
5 practices which protect whales, dolphins and marine
6 life. With these appropriate risk-based mitigation
7 measures, we feel that seismic surveys have and will
8 continue to be undertaken with little or no biologically
9 significant impact to marine mammal populations and to
10 marine life in general. In addition, it is important to
11 remember that seismic surveys are temporary and
12 transitory and use a low-frequency, short duration
13 source signal.

14 In conclusion, the IAGC values the stakeholder
15 process and we are committed to participating in a
16 dialogue with all stakeholders to explain what we do,
17 why we do it and the measures that we take to protect
18 the environment. I have with me today DVDs that explain
19 modern marine geophysical data acquisition, underwater
20 sound and the measures the geophysical industry
21 implements to ensure minimal impacts of our operations
22 on the environment. This information is available for
23 BOEM and for those in attendance today.

24 IAGC wishes to again express -- express our
25 appreciation for this opportunity to voice our support

1 and commitment to work with BOEM and all stakeholders in
2 the development of the Atlantic PEIS, and as previously
3 mentioned, IAGC will be submitting written comments as
4 well.

5 I thank you for the opportunity today.

6 (Whereupon off the record.)

7 BY MR. WALL: -- being here. I appreciate it. My
8 name is Marvin Wall, and I was a -- thank you for being
9 here. I appreciate it. My name is Marvin Wall. I'm a
10 school counselor for 25 years and I have a son here who
11 lives in Wilmington -- as well.

12 In the beginning, I just want to turn the tables
13 on this situation just for a minute, okay? And that is
14 let's say that the dolphins and whales were deciding
15 whether to have seismic testing or not in our
16 neighborhood on land, okay, and they were to set off a
17 stick of dynamite a block away from us. I wonder how
18 we'd feel about that.

19 Okay. The second thing I want to mention is --
20 and this is directly associated with these proceedings,
21 whatever I mention -- is what went on down in the Gulf.
22 We would like to say and lots of people say that the
23 Gulf is all fine now and it's all clean, okay? That's
24 not true. There's tons and tons of oil resting on the
25 bottom of the Gulf. There are dolphins down there with

1 oil in their lungs and their digestive systems. There's
2 lots of oil in the marshlands effecting birds and
3 wildlife there. We have to think about what we're doing
4 before we do it.

5 The last thing I want to mention is is the
6 environment in general, okay? During March, that was
7 the warmest recorded month in recorded weather history.
8 We have droughts that are occurring all over the earth.
9 We have record rainfall that is occurring in other
10 places. The bottom line is we have to stop pouring
11 carbon into our atmosphere. If this is just the
12 beginning, what will it be like in ten or 15 years from
13 now?

14 We need clean energy sources. We could have wind
15 off our coast and we could have thousands and thousands
16 of jobs manufacturing the parts to the turbines right
17 here in North and South Carolina. We would have clean
18 energy from wind, not more planet disrupting activities.

19 This planet is actually speaking to us in clear
20 and unmistakable terms that says change. Change what
21 you're doing or otherwise -- there's a couple little
22 children over here. Their world in 20 or 30 years is
23 going to be a very difficult place to live in.

24 You have a decision to make. The decision you
25 make will affect the lives of all our children and

1 grandchildren.

2 Thank you.

3 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Thank you. Jack Spruill.

4 BY MR. SPRUILL: Good afternoon. Yes, I'm Jack
5 Spruill. I live in Hampstead, in neighboring Pender
6 County, and I'm speaking on behalf of Pender Watch and
7 Conservancy.

8 Before I get into the substance of my comments,
9 I have two administrative questions for you. First, do
10 you plan to post a transcript of these hearings and all
11 written comments on the website?

12 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Part of the file EIS will be a
13 treatment of the testimony that we receive and comments
14 that come in. There will be a matrix in the back of
15 these documents, so we will be tracking what comments
16 were made and how they were dealt with in the document,
17 how we modified the document as a result of that.

18 BY MR. SPRUILL: Well, I realize that NEPA
19 requires you to consider these comments, but my question
20 is will you post the comments and transcripts in -- in
21 verbatim on websites so all of us citizens would have
22 the benefit of them?

23 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: That tends not to be a
24 requirement for the NEPA evaluation, and we don't do
25 that. There is a means by which you can receive all that

1 information if you wanted to receive it under the
2 Freedom of Information Act.

3 BY MR. SPRUILL: I realize that, but I think the
4 fair thing to do for your agency is not -- drag us
5 citizens through the knothole of a FOIA request and
6 volunteer to post -- and volunteer to post it. I've
7 worked with other Federal agencies on DIS and EIS
8 matters, and they do that.

9 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Did you have a comment, sir?

10 BY MR. SPRUILL: Yes, but I'll ask you to
11 reconsider this and be fair to us and you -- you'll have
12 the transcript. You'll have all the written comments.
13 Please post it on a website and make it available to
14 all of us.

15 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: We'll consider it.

16 BY MR. SPRUILL: Thank you. The second
17 administrative comment is the fact that for several
18 years the US Navy considered construction of a 23 square
19 mile sonar range in the Onslow Bight off the general
20 Morehead City area. There was extensive research done on
21 fish and marine mammal and sea turtle movement through
22 that area and the impact of -- of sonar type systems, of
23 scrubee (phonetic) and explosives on those creatures.
24 Well, the Navy decided not to build that range there,
25 but that data exists. Have you made yourself available

1 of that research?

2 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Is that the form of a comment?

3 BY MR. SPRUILL: That was a question.

4 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Thank you for telling us about
5 it.

6 BY MR. SPRUILL: No. It was a question.

7 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: These types of instruments are
8 not in the same frequency category as marine sonar.

9 BY MR. SPRUILL: Scrubee and explosives are, and
10 the fish patterns and the sea turtle patterns and the
11 marine mammal patterns are -- are totally independent of
12 this. It's very good information that should help your
13 document be more complete. Will you get access to that
14 and consider it?

15 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Thank you for your comment,
16 sir.

17 BY MR. SPRUILL: You mind answering my question?

18 BY MR. GOEKE: If there is pertinent information,
19 if it has a bearing on our proposal, yes, we will look
20 and see if the information is available and if it has
21 bearing on our proposal.

22 BY MR. SPRUILL: Well, I can assure you
23 information about marine mammals and fish and sea
24 turtles and the impact of explosives and scrubee on them
25 is pertinent to what you're considering, and the US Navy

1 has it available for your use.

2 BY MR. GOEKE: Thank you. And we'll look into it,
3 the information -- and see if it's -- to what we're
4 doing. Did you have some -- comments --

5 BY MR. SPRUILL: I do, but I think I'm entitled
6 as a citizen to ask questions about the process, am I
7 not?

8 BY MR. GOEKE: You are, indeed. We have a lot of
9 people here who can answer your questions.

10 BY MR. SPRUILL: Well, that's why I'm asking
11 them.

12 BY MR. GOEKE: Okay. What we would like -- what
13 we're trying to do at this point is to get comments
14 directly related to the proposed act and EIS that we've
15 prepared --

16 BY MR. SPRUILL: The availability of extensive
17 information in the US Navy is very relevant to what --
18 what you're considering here.

19 BY MR. GOEKE: Yes, sir, you're right. You're
20 right, and a lot of -- is top secret information, too.
21 We will look to see if the information is available and
22 we will make a determination as to whether it pertains
23 to our proposed action --

24 BY MR. SPRUILL: Well, it's available to me as a
25 citizen. I once held a top secret clearance, but I don't

1 now. So if it's available to me, I assume it's available
2 to your agency.

3 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Okay. Thank you.

4 BY MR. SPRUILL: You're very welcome.

5 The -- the position of Pender Watch and
6 Conservancy is to recommend Alternative C. We realize
7 that this proposed activity under this EIS is
8 information gathering, and it's pretty hard in anything
9 you do in life to turn your back on better information.
10 However, the fact is developing this information is
11 costing us all billions of dollars, correct? And we
12 believe that the bottom line of -- let's assume that
13 reserves are found and they're -- they're -- appear to
14 be economically feasible is that to go forward with oil
15 and gas exploration off the North Carolina coast would
16 not be good public policy.

17 Before I unfold the reasons why for that, I'd
18 like to point out two flaws in the slide presentation
19 you just gave.

20 BY MR. GOEKE: Sir, --

21 BY MR. SPRUILL: That's a comment.

22 BY MR. GOEKE: Sir, you are limited to three
23 minutes.

24 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: If you'd like to amend your
25 comments after everyone has spoken, you're free to do

1 that.

2 BY MR. SPRUILL: Okay. Will you allow me to point
3 out the two errors in your slide before I have to sit
4 down?

5 BY MR. GOEKE: If you do it quickly, yes, sir.

6 BY MR. SPRUILL: I will, indeed. I'll do 'em
7 quicker -- stop interrupting me. I'll do them even
8 faster.

9 Under Alternative B, you mentioned sea turtles
10 nesting on the Central Florida coast. Extensive
11 numbers -- I don't know how many hundreds of sea turtles
12 of all species in the Atlantic range nest on the North
13 Carolina coast from Hatteras southward. It's not just a
14 Central Florida issue.

15 You mentioned the Northern Right Whale spawning
16 off Florida. They also spawn off the Southeastern North
17 Carolina coast, not in the numbers they do off Florida,
18 but they give birth -- I'm not -- sorry -- spawn -- they
19 calve off the Southeastern North Carolina coast.

20 And I'll pick up with the rest of my comments
21 when I'm allowed to at the end. Thank you for listening.

22 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Carina Barnett-Loro.

23 BY MS. BARNETT-LORO: Hi. I'm Carina
24 Barnett-Loro. I'm here today on behalf of the 22,000
25 members and supporters of the North Carolina Sierra

1 Club. Thank you to Mr. Goeke and to Mr. Bjerstedt for
2 the opportunity to speak regarding the draft PEIS for
3 Atlantic -- geological and geophysical activities.

4 We at the Sierra Club believe unequivocally that
5 seismic surveying for oil and gas off the Atlantic coast
6 will harm marine life and fisheries and will not solve
7 our energy problems. The people of North Carolina will
8 be much better served if this administration stops
9 allocating time and resources toward oil and gas
10 exploration and instead focuses on the development of
11 clean, renewable and significantly less invasive
12 offshore wind farms.

13 While the oil and gas industry may want the
14 public to believe that testing and drilling offshore can
15 be done in an environmentally sensitive manner, we know
16 that's not the case. The Sierra Club stands opposed to
17 seismic testing in its own right, but also as the first
18 step in a series of processes that collectively wreak
19 havoc on the environment and public health of our people
20 at every step.

21 From the seismic testing which this draft EIS
22 specifically addresses, to potential blowouts during
23 drilling as we saw just a few years ago with the BP
24 Deepwater Horizon disaster, to explosions during the
25 refinery process, as we saw last month in Memphis, to

1 massive spills during transportation and piping, as we
2 saw with the Exxon Valdez and Yellowstone just last
3 summer, to the millions of tons of carbon dioxide and
4 thousands of tons of particulate matter that combustion
5 of oil creates every day -- as this administration well
6 knows, seismic testing has serious impacts on marine
7 species. In fact, just last month, you called for
8 protecting -- protecting the Gulf to be -- in causing
9 the deaths of thousands of dolphins in the Gulf of
10 Mexico. I'm sorry -- dozens of dolphins in the Gulf of
11 Mexico.

12 Compressed air exploding underwater every second
13 for days, weeks, even months at a time destroys whales'
14 ability to communicate, disrupting their feeding,
15 migration and breeding patterns. Here in North Carolina,
16 endangered Right Whales, but also Sperm, Humpback,
17 Pilot, Finback -- and Finback Whales as well as
18 Bottlenose, Short-Beak and Atlantic spotted dolphins,
19 among others, all migrating through the waters off our
20 coast, by this department's own estimation, seismic
21 exploration will injure up to 138,500 marine mammals and
22 seriously disrupt their vital daily activities.

23 There are only about 400 North Atlantic Right
24 Whales left in the world, and under the current
25 proposal, seismic testing could take place right on the

1 edge of known calving grounds, filling it with
2 disruptive blasts that can travel for hundreds to
3 thousands of miles. The sole habitat protection that
4 this administration has proposed in regards to
5 endangered Right Whales is -- inadequate and needs to be
6 addressed.

7 In addition, Loggerheads, Green, Leatherback,
8 and even Kemp's Ridley sea turtles migrate through and
9 nest along our coast in North Carolina. As someone who's
10 grown up here in North Carolina and lived my entire life
11 here, I've had the privilege of watching those turtles
12 hatch and be rehabilitated and released again. And
13 impact on some of the seismic testing on sea turtles is
14 not as well-documented as on marine mammals, but turtles
15 are certainly able to hear noise, and their predator
16 avoidance instincts depend on their ability to detect
17 tiny vibrations underwater, which could be overwhelmed
18 by seismic testing blasts.

19 Airgun blasts have also been documented to
20 displace commercial fisheries thousands of square miles
21 from where the test occurred. Fishermen in parts --
22 fishermen in parts of the world where seismic testing is
23 occurring have already begun to seek compensation for
24 their losses.

25 We recognize the administration's desire to

1 develop secure and domestic sources of energy, but
2 seismic testing for offshore oil and gas that could
3 ultimately lead to drilling off of North Carolina's
4 coast is not the answer. North Carolina has the best
5 offshore wind resources of any state on the East Coast,
6 and a shift in focus of this Bureau from dirty, harmful
7 and non-renewable fossil fuels toward clean, abundant
8 and renewable alternatives is not only prudent, but
9 environmentally and economically beneficial to the
10 people of the State of North Carolina.

11 Where offshore seismic testing and drilling for
12 oil and gas would put tourism, fishing jobs and our --
13 our delicate marine ecosystem at risk, offshore wind
14 development would create thousands of permanent jobs,
15 reduce pollution, and even benefit ocean life through
16 artificial reef creation.

17 For the members and supporters of the Sierra
18 Club that I represent today as well as for myself, the
19 choice is clear. We want offshore wind, not offshore
20 drilling in North Carolina, and we call on the
21 administration to choose Alternative C, the no action
22 alternative, keeping harmful seismic testing operations
23 away from our coast and maintaining the moratorium on
24 East Coast offshore drilling beyond 2017.

25 I thank you again for the opportunity to submit

1 these comments, and I'm going to leave you with a copy
2 of these comments. Thank you.

3 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Thank you. Mike Brown.

4 BY MR. BROWN: Good afternoon. My name is Mike
5 Brown, and I'm here representing the Southeast Energy
6 Alliance, the Southeastern Chapter of Consumer Energy
7 Alliance, a nonprofit, nonpartisan group dedicated to
8 expanding dialogue between energy -- sectors, ensuring
9 balanced national energy policy. I am pleased to be here
10 today, and I thank you for the time to speak.

11 Considering that 30 years have passed since the last
12 estimate of Atlantic OCS energy resources were
13 completed, we must allow for seismic studies to be
14 conducted in an environmentally friendly manner so that
15 proper resource assessments can be made to support
16 future lease sales. With the availability of newer and
17 better seismic exploration -- that resulted in the
18 current estimates of oil and natural gas resources will
19 change.

20 The latest technology will allow for development
21 of resources that were previously thought unrecoverable
22 as well as locating new resources and new location. In
23 fact, further exploration has led to increased resource
24 estimates in parts of offshore Alaska and the Gulf of
25 Mexico, where oil estimates increased by 400 percent and

1 natural gas estimates doubled between 1995 and 2003.

2 Quite simply, there is much for us to learn
3 about the energy resources contained within the Atlantic
4 waters, and we must begin that process now. We must
5 recognize the tremendous economic opportunity that safe
6 and responsible offshore energy exploration presents
7 before the citizens of North Carolina and the nation at
8 large.

9 According to a 2009 report -- 2009 from the
10 Southeastern Energy Alliance, oil and gas development
11 off North Carolina could add approximately 659 million
12 gross domestic product annually, generate almost 150
13 billion in revenue for Federal, state and local
14 governments, as well as create thousands of jobs in the
15 state. If current and Federal laws were amended to allow
16 for royalty revenue sharing, the state could receive up
17 to 577 million annually from offshore exploration
18 production. Without a cohesive recent strategy for the
19 Atlantic, there is little incentive for the industry to
20 collect seismic data and move us forward.

21 In conclusion, SEA feels that with the
22 appropriate mitigation measures, seismic surveys can be
23 undertaken with little or no impact to marine life. As
24 such, we hope the process surrounding the development of
25 PEIS moves forward expeditiously so that the essential

1 data that -- can be available as soon as possible to
2 support future lease sales and ensure development -- we
3 thank you for your time and your work on this project.

4 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Thank you. Dan Cameron.

5 BY MR. CAMERON: I just want to say thank you for
6 the opportunity to be here. We really appreciate it.

7 One thing that I'd like to clarify right away is
8 there's no dynamite that's going to be used offshore, is
9 that correct?

10 BY MR. GOEKE: Yes, sir.

11 BY MR. CAMERON: Okay. So there will not be any
12 dynamite explosion, any of that in our vicinity at any
13 time in the --

14 BY MR. GOEKE: No.

15 BY MR. CAMERON: Thank you. I appreciate that
16 clarification.

17 My name is Dan Cameron. I'm representing the
18 people that had to work today and tonight and tomorrow.
19 I'm not representing anybody offshore. I'm representing
20 the people of North Carolina that work.

21 Transportation is our lifeblood. Everybody has a
22 car and drives. We have no viable bridge fuel that will
23 get us from oil to alternative fuel. Which everybody
24 talks about solar -- don't have cars that run on solar,
25 don't have cars that run on wind, but there is something

1 that cars can run on today that are viable that will cut
2 our emissions in half that will cost us half if we go
3 get it, and it's natural gas.

4 For people to come here and talk about dynamite
5 being used, talk about emissions, talk about wind,
6 talking about solar, I applaud them for being here and
7 talking about it. We have to have something happen in
8 our generation, our lifetime that is going to get us
9 from a bridge between Point A and Point B. Natural gas
10 is that viable source.

11 There's no way I can run my automobile on wind
12 or solar. It's just not going to happen in my lifetime.
13 Maybe it will. I hope it will eventually, but in the
14 meantime, I have to get to and from work -- I didn't do
15 that to anybody here, so please don't heckle while I'm
16 speaking. That would be so nice. I would like to have a
17 viable energy source that I today can put in my car, pay
18 half the price and have half the emissions. Progress
19 Energy is doing that right now with their power plants.
20 They're going to cut electricity and cut emissions
21 almost by half when it comes to emissions with natural
22 gas.

23 So please give us an opportunity and the
24 knowledge and the understanding, the information to go
25 out and see what we have available to us. If it comes up

1 off the floor of the ocean, it bubbles to the surface
2 and dissipates. Natural gas does not leave a blemish on
3 our shoreline. It does not go into a big glob on the
4 ocean. It bubbles up and dissipates. Natural gas is the
5 one fuel that will bridge us to the next level, so
6 please -- it's abundant -- inexpensive. It's fairly
7 safe, and it is going to help us get power and
8 electricity with less emissions, so please give us that
9 opportunity.

10 The other thing I'd like to comment on just very
11 quickly is we get a lot of print in this area. One of
12 our print media said that y'all are going to use
13 dynamite, so thank you for coming and clarifying that
14 dynamite is not in your program to be used.

15 The other thing is they comment that you can
16 drill all you want, but it won't lower the price of gas.
17 Oh, really? Natural gas has dropped dramatically over
18 the last few years in price because we've gone and found
19 it and now producing -- it's half the price of gasoline,
20 so when people talk about dynamite being used and you
21 can't reduce the price of gas, natural gas can be
22 reduced and the price can come down dramatically.

23 So please give us some options instead of just
24 standing and not doing anything, because people that
25 work three jobs, have a family, look after their kids

1 and their elderly parents, they can't be here today to
2 talk to you. We need somebody to represent us to give us
3 options that we can understand and proceed upon hard
4 facts, not talking about dynamite.

5 So thank you so much for your time and for being
6 here and for clarifying some of this misinformation that
7 we get in our print media. Thank you.

8 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Thank you. Ed Beck.

9 BY MR. BECK: Thank you. I'm Ed Beck. I'm a
10 resident of North Carolina, lifelong resident of North
11 Carolina, and it was unclear to me, looking at the
12 handout information today and also listening to the
13 presentation, you know, exactly who the applicants were.
14 I just hear the industry, but I'll -- I'll look forward
15 to looking at the EIS and see if it's mentioned there.

16 And it's also unclear to me who's going to be
17 funding and doing the testing, but we've proposed to do
18 that, so I hope that's also included in the EIS. But,
19 anyway, what is -- what is pretty clear is that it's --
20 you know, the focus is to -- to get support for offshore
21 drilling and extraction of petroleum product. While
22 petroleum products continue to be a tremendous value to
23 humans, it's time, I think, to look elsewhere. It's come
24 at a tremendous cost, environmental cost and health
25 cost, and it's time -- time to look elsewhere. The risk

1 of environmental impact -- involving extraction,
2 handling, processing of the product is just too great.
3 We need to be looking and it's time to just be looking
4 at alternatives.

5 It's also become clear to me that the -- the
6 companies or that -- that further extraction of product
7 offshore here will not result in better energy security
8 to the citizens of this country or this state or this
9 region. What is pretty clear to me is that those
10 products will be sold on the world market to the highest
11 bidders by companies that don't -- don't have -- don't
12 feel responsibility to this country and -- but, anyway,
13 I -- I -- I -- I doubt the claim of additional energy
14 securities that would result from it, so I would support
15 Alternative C. Thank you.

16 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Thank you, sir. I might
17 mention just by way of information we have 11 permit
18 applications for 2-D seismic surveys, seven permit
19 applications for magnetic survey and seven applications
20 for gravity survey. During a seismic survey, magnetic
21 surveys and gravity surveys tend to be run at the same
22 time. Those were submitted from nine operators. They're
23 not in the environmental impact statement, but if you
24 wish to provide me with your e-mail address, I can
25 e-mail you back when I'm in the office and send you a

1 hyperlink to where they are -- the public portions of
2 the applications are posted on our website. They're just
3 not in this document because it's not terribly relevant.

4 By way -- yes. The question now -- the
5 government doesn't do this work. It allows it to happen
6 by private industry on public land, so it's private
7 industries and contractors that seek the data that are
8 performing the work. They're -- they're paying for it
9 themselves, and they tend to sell it to industry for
10 industry to use for their own purposes, whether they
11 want to express interest in the area or pursue a lease
12 there.

13 Ann Sullivan.

14 BY MS. SULLIVAN: I guess I'll hold it, because
15 I'm short. My name is Ann Sullivan. I'm from Goldsboro,
16 North Carolina, and unlike the man that said it costs
17 him \$8 to drive down here, it cost me 60.

18 I would like to opt for option number -- A, and
19 the reason is this. I think that the United States and
20 North Carolina should especially go after all means
21 possible to reduce the price of gasoline and our natural
22 resources, and that includes natural gas. It has been
23 said here that natural gas is the cleanest energy that
24 we have, and it dissipates.

25 And I have a question for you. I heard someone

1 say that these things can be -- when you're doing the
2 seismic test, it could go for thousands of miles. If
3 that's true, I think y'all need to turn that technology
4 over to the military so that we can defend this country,
5 because I don't think we have that type of technology
6 that exists today.

7 Also I wanted to let you know that I'm
8 originally from South Carolina, and these studies used
9 to be called geological surveys with natural resources,
10 and the same test that y'all had done before that had
11 been done offshore and all around this country that
12 showed that we had less resources than what we actually
13 do -- someone else brought up about the studies in the
14 midwest that showed we actually have more oil and gas
15 deposits in the midwest than we ever dreamed that we
16 had, especially in Alaska.

17 Well, here's a little example -- I'm from South
18 Carolina. This same geological survey that was done 30,
19 40 years ago showed that there were no marketable
20 resources, mineral resources in South Carolina. Anybody
21 ever heard of Ridgeway, South Carolina? The Japanese
22 came in where there was nothing that would benefit South
23 Carolina and just literally bought the whole town of
24 Ridgeway. They moved 'em out temporarily and they mined
25 these resources -- and it was gold, by the way. All that

1 gold went to Japan. We didn't get any of it here in the
2 United States.

3 Not only it -- would it bring down the price of
4 gasoline and our cost of living, it would also help with
5 our national security. We wouldn't have to beg, borrow
6 and steal and bow down to any foreign nation to keep our
7 country safe. And it's all about keeping my
8 grandchildren safe.

9 And -- and someone was talking about that our
10 way of life would be destroyed for the grandchildren.
11 Well, you know, I have that very same argument. If we
12 don't do this, if we don't allow y'all Option A -- and I
13 think you all ought not to be limited to just where you
14 can do it. I think if the technology exists where it is
15 safe, where we're going to have jobs for this country
16 and it's going to help our way of life, I think we
17 should go after it and go after it full force.

18 Thank you.

19 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Ken Wilson.

20 BY MR. WILSON: Thank you. Just shooting from the
21 hip a little bit, because your clarification remark at
22 the beginning sort of threw me for a loop -- the
23 document is pretty voluminous.

24 And to give you a little bit of intro, I work
25 for a firm that has local offices here in Wilmington. We

1 specialize in beach nourishment projects. We -- that the
2 -- do offshore sand investigation for these types of
3 projects, and our main concern is limitations on the
4 high-resolution geophysics that -- that might come out
5 of this programmatic EIS. And so the way that we've been
6 reading the document, we -- we believe that -- that --
7 that the same restrictions that -- that apply to the
8 airgun surveys would apply to the high-resolution
9 geophysics.

10 And we were concerned about the economic impact
11 on local governments that are funding these beach
12 nourishment projects and additional limitations and when
13 they can perform these surveys, so I don't know if
14 there's somebody here in the back from your agency that
15 can talk to me a little bit more about the specifics
16 there, but I guess in general we would hope that as you
17 all continue to modify this document to -- try to tease
18 out and make it a little bit more clear what the
19 specific implications for high-resolution geophysics
20 would be on those marine mineral surveys for -- for
21 beach nourishment sand.

22 Just, you know, right now, we do a lot of work
23 in the Gulf of Mexico, these types of studies. We do
24 work on the Atlantic coast, and right now when we do
25 these surveys in -- you know, outside of state waters in

1 Federal waters, you know, on the Atlantic coast, we're
2 asked to abide by the same types of mitigative
3 restrictions that they have for the Gulf of Mexico, so
4 we have marine mammal observers onboard that -- go into
5 mitigative measures that have been -- that have been
6 established in the Gulf of Mexico when we are doing
7 these types of surveys in the Atlantic now.

8 So just to -- to make sure that it's very clear
9 as to any additional mitigative protocol that might be
10 put in place for the high-resolution geophysics through
11 this programmatic EIS, we would ask for those
12 clarifications to be in the document. Is there someone
13 in the back that I can talk to that's --

14 BY MR. GOEKE: We certainly can chat with you
15 after.

16 BY MR. WILSON: Okay. Great. Thank you --
17 appreciate that.

18 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: You may also take a look at
19 the executive summary in the document. There is a table
20 there that discusses all of the survey protocol measures
21 and the -- the seasonal closure areas and the technique
22 to which they apply, so that's a good place to go --
23 executive summary.

24 Bill Weatherspoon.

25 BY MR. WEATHERSPOON: Gentlemen, thank you. My

1 name is Bill Weatherspoon. I'm executive director of the
2 North Carolina Petroleum Council and in that job
3 represent the American Petroleum Institute here in North
4 Carolina.

5 The work that you are doing is extremely
6 important, and I want to commend you and I want to
7 applaud the level that you have achieved already. We
8 very much appreciate your bringing your series of public
9 hearings to North Carolina so that we can participate in
10 giving you some comments and some input. Thank you.

11 I would say for starters that are Alternative C
12 is unthinkable. Alternative C would not lead to
13 employment. It would not lead to new government
14 revenues. It would not lead to more safe, secure
15 homegrown energy, so I would encourage you to focus on
16 Alternative A.

17 Let me say that the data that we have is now 25
18 to 30 years old. That point has been well made by
19 previous speakers. Frankly, I have lived the last 25 to
20 30 years in the petroleum industry. One of my first
21 assignments was a meeting on scoping hearing in, of all
22 places, Wilmington, North Carolina in the mid '70s. We
23 talked through all these issues at that time. There's
24 never been a well drilled.

25 I would say to you that my feeling and my

1 experience is that voters in North Carolina are growing
2 weary with energy inaction and energy delay, and,
3 candidly, we see that a lot of the calls for studies are
4 really disguised. They are simply a strategy of delay,
5 and that delay has won the day for the last 40 years.
6 And over this period of moratorium -- we could not drill
7 in the Pacific and could not drill in the Atlantic and
8 could not drill in segments of the Gulf of Mexico.

9 The proof of the pudding is in the data.

10 Imported oil over this period of time increased from 30
11 percent to 60 percent. Now, 30 percent to 60 percent on
12 any elementary school blackboard is a 100 percent
13 increase, not an increase in jobs, not an increase in
14 revenue, but an increase in the dependency. That was the
15 result of a strategy of saying no.

16 And what I'm here to tell you with confidence is
17 that North Carolina voters are saying in increasingly
18 dramatic fashion that they support the search for more
19 homegrown energy, more homegrown oil and gas, and 90
20 percent of the people reflected in our public opinion
21 surveys -- 90 percent of North Carolina voters are
22 saying that they recognize that more oil and gas
23 development will produce and provide benefits to the
24 nation. They understand that there will be more jobs.
25 They understand that there will be more revenue. They

1 understand that there will be safe, secure energy here.

2 Now, all of us are creatures on this planet.
3 All of us need to protect our fellow creatures and
4 critters. We need to be responsible and caring. I'm
5 pleased to see the words negligible, minimal and no
6 impact in your Alternatives A and B. I urge you to focus
7 on those alternatives when you bring this plan to the
8 nation.

9 And for those of us in North Carolina who are
10 totally dependent upon energy from other states, we
11 suspect because of an earlier lease sale that's been
12 referenced from the '70s -- we suspect that when we see
13 a company bid 103 million dollars for one tract -- we
14 suspect that there was some excitement somewhere one day
15 by a geologist about what may lay 40 miles off our
16 coast.

17 We know that our people need that energy. We
18 prefer to get it here. We prefer to get it through
19 American jobs. We prefer to pay taxes here, and we now
20 know that we need it to be safe, secure homegrown
21 energy.

22 I think you're on the right track. I hope that
23 you have heard this message in other public forums on
24 this particular issue. I commend you in the direction
25 that you're headed. You have our full support, and I

1 believe that you have the support of the people across
2 the State of North Carolina.

3 Thank you very much.

4 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Thank you. Bobby Greer.

5 BY MR. GREER: I'd like to speak again, but I've
6 already spoken -- my name came up twice.

7 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: That's why I was looking --
8 looked familiar.

9 Paul Duval.

10 BY MR. DUVAL: I was -- back in the mid '70s,
11 '75, '76 -- it says on the water welding -- they done --
12 done tests down here back then. They found oil and gas,
13 yes, but I ain't saying everybody -- they had -- on the
14 water -- water -- no -- they already -- test out there.
15 They know we got gas.

16 I urge everybody to say no test or drill on our
17 coast here. We don't need it. What's wrong with going on
18 the land and getting your oil and gas? We don't need
19 it -- out -- the ocean. We need the oil in land took
20 out. We got plenty of oil and gas on the land. Go on the
21 land and get your oil and gas and you won't -- right
22 now, we can't even keep a fish out in the -- I go to --
23 I've been going out in the Gulf fishing. Now we've
24 got -- to throw 'em back in. There's a -- just a few
25 that we can keep. Black bass, all kind of fish -- we

1 can't keep. We've got to throw 'em back in, so there
2 ain't no use to go out there no more -- do your drilling
3 on the land, not in our water and ruin our -- that water
4 out there belong to everybody, and oil companies should
5 not be out there putting oil drilling there to ruin our
6 water.

7 That's all I've got to say. Thank you. We have
8 plenty of natural gas on the land --

9 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Jean Hampton.

10 BY MS. HAMPTON: Thank you so very much for this
11 time. I am a mom. I'm not a politician. I'm not with the
12 oil companies, but I do have a voice, and I am grateful
13 for the opportunity to use it.

14 I'm Jean Hampton, and I'm from Myrtle Beach,
15 South Carolina, and thank you so much for this
16 opportunity.

17 My statement is pretty brief. We need
18 information, not just assumptions. We need to protect
19 our national security while safely exploring our natural
20 resources. Other countries from which we are dependent
21 on oil do not respect our natural resources or anything
22 else, including our freedom, which scares me.

23 I'm a mother, and I would like to be able to
24 hand my daughter a nation that is secure in every
25 aspect. This is much more urgent than protecting our

1 environment. We need to protect our environment, but we
2 have the technology and the means to do that and still
3 explore our natural resources.

4 I would encourage you to consider Alternative A
5 in your decision. This type of exploration that we have
6 now and the resolve of the United States to use our own
7 resources will send a global message to the rest of the
8 world. It is time for action, not just more talk,
9 committees and all these things that are going on behind
10 closed doors and lobbying. We need action.

11 We are Americans. We love our country. We love
12 our resources, but it's time for someone to step up and
13 be the adult in the room and do something productive for
14 our country. This will improve jobs and will bring
15 increased revenue not only to North Carolina, South
16 Carolina, but to every state up and down the Eastern
17 Seaboard, in my opinion.

18 Other nations are already producing these kinds
19 of viable energy resources, and I don't think the United
20 States of America needs to be left in the dust. It's
21 time for us to stand up and do the right thing.

22 Thank you so much for this opportunity.

23 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Paige Freeman.

24 BY MS. FREEMAN: Hello -- I moved to North
25 Carolina about four years ago. I moved here with my

1 husband to raise a family, and at this point now, I'm
2 really questioning if I want to live here.

3 I know that the seismic testing is a precursor
4 to fracking, and if you guys did find the oil that you
5 were looking for and you chose to perform the
6 fracking -- I know that in Ohio thousands of people are
7 getting cancer there. I have seen e-mails where -- and
8 people can actually light their tap water on fire with a
9 lighter, and that really, really scares me, and I really
10 hope that you guys consider not doing this.

11 And I'm just going to read some information
12 here. Seismic testing is harmful to the wildlife and
13 fishing economies all along the coast. Airgun booming
14 could disturb and harm the hearing of endangered Right
15 Whales and other marine wildlife. Airguns have been
16 shown to displace commercial species of fish
17 horizontally and vertically in the water column on a
18 vast scale over thousands of square kilometers, and this
19 result has been dramatically depressing the catch rates
20 of species such as cod -- and rockfish across areas as
21 large as the State of Rhode Island. This is leading
22 fishermen in Norway and other parts of the world to
23 seek -- compensation for their losses. This of course,
24 does have an -- impact on commercial and recreational
25 fishermen.

1 Commercial and recreational fishing off the Mid
2 and South Atlantic -- Southeast Atlantic -- excuse me --
3 and this is not including New Jersey -- generate about
4 7.4 billion dollars annually and support over 180,000
5 jobs. Fishermen in some parts of the world where seismic
6 testing has already occurred, they are now seeking
7 industry compensation for their losses.

8 We're also receiving information here that we
9 don't need more drilling. Oil and gas rigs have
10 increased 150 percent in -- and the biggest oil
11 companies have saw over a 75 percent jump in their
12 profits just last year alone.

13 And according to the US Energy Information
14 Agency, which is an independent division within the
15 Department of Industry -- is indicating that fully
16 developing all of our recoverable offshore oil reserves
17 everywhere would lower pump prices by exactly three
18 cents and it would take 20 years to do so, so I know,
19 ma'am, the woman that's sitting next to me, you thought
20 that it was going to make it go -- gas would be less
21 expensive, but that's really not going to happen.

22 So I really hope that you guys will --
23 considering -- with what I'm saying. I thank you so much
24 for allowing me to speak.

25 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: That's the end of the list of

1 people who have signed up to speak. At this point, if
2 anyone else wishes to speak -- yes, sir. Come up to
3 the microphone and please state your name and spell it
4 for the court reporter.

5 BY MR. WALL: I spoke briefly before, but you
6 said we could add an addition to our comments.

7 My name is Marvin Wall, and I have an
8 addition and two points of clarification. The addition
9 is that I am strongly in favor of Alternative C. I did
10 not mention that in my previous comments.

11 My points of clarification are that I did not
12 say that dynamite would be used in this testing. I
13 merely referred to it as an analogy as to the sound
14 impact that could occur with whales and dolphins. An
15 addition is is that we already have vehicles, the Volt,
16 Nissan -- and others -- coming that run on electricity
17 which can come from solar and wind power.

18 I just wanted to make those points of
19 clarification. Thank you.

20 BY MR. DILLON: Thanks for coming. Your -- my
21 name is Todd Dillon, (phonetic) and the information that
22 you guys had provided us is incredibly deep and very
23 detailed.

24 I'm an automotive enthusiast. I -- I'm also an
25 AMA superbike pro marshal, really involved in

1 motorsports racing. I race myself. I own a landscape
2 company, and I using fuel constantly, diesel. I'm using
3 regular gasoline. I'm using mixed fuel in a lot of my
4 equipment.

5 As a landscaper, I go out of my way to find gas
6 stations that sell non-ethanol based gasoline, and in
7 my -- in my two stroke equipment, we have to mix oil,
8 and I'm paying about \$7.34 a gallon to run my equipment
9 right now, and I'm just one guy with three helpers, and
10 it's me probably times millions of other guys like me
11 who are spending about seven bucks a gallon to run their
12 equipment.

13 If there's any way that we could get ethanol out
14 of gasoline -- because ethanol is a solvent, and what it
15 does, it erodes the gas lines in our tanks and erodes
16 the gaskets in our equipment, and instead of having the
17 small equipment repair shops repairing the equipment,
18 they just throw it in the garbage and replace it. That's
19 where we're at now. We're at -- disposable parts with
20 our small equipment.

21 And, you know, in here in front of a Federal
22 board, I'm just one little guy, you know, and I don't
23 know how many people that I could be representing in
24 front of this microphone -- I can tell you if there's
25 some way -- and I'm an advocate of trying to find

1 alternative methods of fueling our vehicles, fueling our
2 homes, getting ourselves from Point A to Point B.

3 I envision some day of having magnetic
4 transportation -- a highway has rails in it, vehicles
5 have magnets in them and they are based on a system that
6 gets our vehicles across just like a trolley, but I know
7 it's a way down the road.

8 I -- I really enjoy watching a show on Velocity
9 Channel called -- Auto Week covers every single episode
10 of municipalities in the United States that has
11 transferred its garbage trucks, dump trucks and service
12 vehicles to LP. It's already in place, which means at
13 least in the past year with each episode that I've
14 watched, which comes on every week, there's at least 50
15 cities in the United States that have already migrated
16 towards this method of fueling their vehicles. With
17 that, we already have the technology. It's already here.
18 The engines are already being built.

19 Progress Energy has said or provided information
20 that with homes that have gas -- from the street to
21 their house, all they need to do is put in a small
22 station. They can plug their car in and compress the gas
23 into the tanks and fill it up overnight, ready to
24 transport the next day. However, with that, we still
25 need more stuff.

1 I've tried to convert my own home to -- wind
2 powered energy, did my research and discovered that NOAA
3 has a chart that runs the entire East Coast of all the
4 strengths of the wind of sustained mile an hour
5 over the entire course of a year. North Carolina does
6 not have the wind to support windmills offshore. Other
7 states do, but this state does not, based on the
8 geographic information that NOAA has provided us.

9 So, you know, what drives me crazy more than
10 anything else is standing behind -- sitting behind
11 somebody -- they flick their butt out the window and I
12 look down and the ground is covered in cigarette butts.
13 It's not good stewardship to pollute this planet.

14 I believe that we have the technology to capture
15 this natural resource that we have off our coast and
16 convert it into uses of our daily life. It's there. We
17 can do it, but we need to utilize the safest practice as
18 possible and go -- thank you.

19 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Thank you. Yes, sir?

20 BY MR. HUNT: -- I didn't plan on speaking, but I
21 just wanted to address -- this information here --

22 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Give us your --

23 BY MR. HUNT: My name's Scott Hunt, a lifelong
24 resident of Wilmington, North Carolina. I'm probably the
25 only person in the room that actually has worked in the

1 oil and gas industry. I worked in the seismic industry
2 for a number of years -- as a matter of fact, I did some
3 of the last work off of the coast here, using the
4 antiquated equipment somebody referred to. I hope
5 they didn't mean the people operating it, too. I worked
6 in that business for ten years or so every day, and I
7 can tell you firsthand I never witnessed any ecological
8 damage, injury to marine mammals, fish or birds.

9 The way behind the eight ball on this thing when
10 you -- out, continue the exploration that we started
11 years ago. I'm sure the equipment is much better now. I
12 would love to know where we are with that -- let's find
13 out what's out there and go get it -- the guy who was
14 concerned about the fishing, try the Gulf. Fishing is
15 much better -- they love those offshore platforms. So
16 that certainly can be done without harming the
17 environment. So that's my -- say on it.

18 Thank you.

19 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Thank you, sir.

20 BY MR. BALLANTINE: My name is Patrick Ballantine
21 and -- may not have made the list to speak.

22 I just want to speak on behalf of the general
23 public that I believe that this is just common sense,
24 and I appreciate you being here. I want to thank you all
25 for doing this. I understand you're from New Orleans, so

1 thank you for making the trip up and down the Atlantic
2 seaboard.

3 I think you'll find North Carolina to be the
4 best of all those states, but we love our environment
5 here, and I'm certainly one that loves the environment.
6 I grew up here on the coast and I've been a big part of
7 environmental stewardship in North Carolina. I've won
8 awards for -- Keep America Clean and Beautiful. I
9 cosponsored legislation in the North Carolina Senate to
10 help the sea turtle hospital receive funding.

11 You know, again, I think it's a matter of common
12 sense and extreme on both sides -- what we're looking
13 for. No one wants to just go in and have a thousand
14 people drilling holes everywhere and sticking dynamite
15 everywhere. On the other hand, I would hope that no one
16 would want us to go back to the pre-industry age, so
17 let's have some middle ground and some -- I think that's
18 what we're looking for.

19 It seems to me that you all are being very
20 diligent and reasonable. I don't know enough, but it
21 seems to me that Option A and B are very reasonable.
22 Option C is not really an option. That's just saying no,
23 and no is not an option.

24 President Obama, I understand, says that
25 he's -- the above energy -- if that is true, and I hope

1 it is, then we can explore other options. At the same
2 time, we can utilize our own natural resources. I
3 understand also that this is just a first step. I mean,
4 drilling is going to be a long way off. You were
5 directed to do this over two years ago, and your
6 report's not even going to be due for another nine
7 months, and then somebody's got to go through the
8 permitting process and all that, so it's just the first
9 step.

10 We're trying to gather information and see
11 what's out there, and with this new technology, it makes
12 sense to me that you would want this, because you're not
13 going to have hundreds or dozens of people out there
14 doing something without knowing where something is. This
15 is going to let them know exactly where it is so they
16 can drill and bring something up. It seems to me that
17 that would be better for the environment, not just
18 drilling somewhere where there's nothing.

19 I also understand that this is not something
20 that's going to be right off our coast. It's -- you
21 know, in living here, I believe you can see 12 or 13
22 miles from the shore out on the horizon. We're talking
23 about two or three horizons away, so we're talking about
24 exploration out there that won't be seen from inshore.
25 Natural gas is what most people expect is plentiful out

1 there. So, you know, one of the Exxon Valdez issues that
2 may be brought up I think are not as relevant with all
3 the new technology.

4 So in -- I just want to say that I -- I believe
5 that this is a reasonable, logical, common sense first
6 step. All it is is information gathering. I trust as
7 a -- taxpayer and a citizen of North Carolina and the
8 United States that you all on the environmental side are
9 going to do the right thing to protect the
10 environment -- and that's what we have to do. I mean, I
11 have -- I saw your presentation -- you didn't even give
12 anything as far as cost/benefit. You didn't say anything
13 about the economic impact and jobs and revenues to the
14 state. Your job is for the environment, and we expect
15 you to -- if you say yes to this to protect our
16 environment, and we assume that A and B is going to
17 allow for the exploration and for the protection of the
18 environment.

19 I think you can have a balance. I believe that
20 you all, if you do your jobs -- to allow the companies
21 to explore in the right areas, bring the natural
22 resource up, help us create thousands of jobs in this
23 state, bring maybe revenue to North Carolina and other
24 parts of the country and also help us wean ourselves off
25 the foreign oil dependency -- and that's a national

1 security issue.

2 So for all of these reasons, I want to say thank
3 you for -- for doing this. I believe you're on the right
4 track. It's just one more small, slow step, but it's a
5 step for common sense, and I appreciate it.

6 Thank you.

7 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Thank you, sir, and I
8 apologize if we overlooked your name in the sign-up
9 sheet. Yes, ma'am?

10 BY MS. CARMEN: Good afternoon, sir. Thank you
11 for being --

12 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Could you state your name?

13 BY MS. CARMEN: My name is Colleen Carmen.

14 (phonetic) I'm also a -- I agree with what a lot of
15 people are saying, that we should be for -- and using
16 Alternative A or B -- I don't know which one was better,
17 but either one -- but not C. That's not an option
18 either.

19 I think that there was also in that -- had --
20 it also had a study in science that we need in this
21 country for college students that are wanting to study
22 more science that will have this going into a science
23 technology and that would create the jobs for the
24 college funds to -- and even give some -- some
25 opportunities for the college level students to get

1 scholarship programs and that will add to -- the more
2 college fund students that want to go to college, and so
3 we need more science. That will add to science studies,
4 because we are failing in science. We're failing in
5 mathematics. This will also add to that, and we need to
6 have that in our country.

7 As far as what some people are saying about
8 maybe wind power, I came from a state, Rhode Island,
9 moved down to South Carolina. I'm a resident now of
10 South Carolina, and because I had to move down from
11 Rhode Island, they had the wind power energy going on up
12 there, but it was not working at all. I can tell you,
13 because I was from that state, wind power does not work.
14 It would cost the state over 500 million -- went into
15 bankruptcy. The state had to go from seven percent to
16 eight percent tax. People were not liking it at all.
17 There was a lot of people that were upset about the wind
18 power machines being done up in Rhode Island, so it's
19 not working.

20 This will work. Natural gas will work. It will
21 work for the country. It will work for the people. The
22 people of North Carolina and South Carolina and all over
23 will need the jobs. You need to have this work. You need
24 to get on this as soon as possible, because more
25 countries may look into it and they may grab that

1 natural gas before you do or we do and we won't have it.
2 We'll have to be dependent on some other country again
3 if they grab that natural gas from us, so they need to
4 get on this right away before another country gets in on
5 it. That's what we want.

6 Thank you.

7 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Is there anyone -- sir?

8 BY MR. SWEGO: My name is Al Swego. (phonetic)
9 Several people have talked about the fishing industry,
10 about what this will do to the fishing. Well, I've been
11 a commercial fisherman over half my life, and I've seen
12 a lot of changes in the industry. Over half my family,
13 uncles and aunts and grandfather were all fishermen. The
14 oil industry in the Gulf -- has flourished with oil
15 wells in the Gulf. Shrimpers are doing really good. It
16 has very little affect on the fish that are around these
17 wells.

18 One thing that I think a lot of people don't
19 realize is that fish are very much smarter than we are
20 in a lot of ways. If they don't like the -- noise or
21 smell or something, they'll move away. They're not going
22 to stay there and be bothered by it -- that was pretty
23 smart. We stand around and complain about it.

24 I think as a fisherman, I say do it, drill it,
25 get it out of the bottom before somebody else does.

1 Thank you.

2 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Yes, sir?

3 BY MR. WRIGHT: My name's Curtis Wright, from
4 Wilmington, North Carolina. I wasn't going to speak
5 today.

6 I have the -- I have the benefit of being on the
7 air for 20 hours a week where I can control the amount
8 of time and anything I want to say on the air, and I'm
9 very -- I'm very fortunate to be able to do that as a
10 broadcaster.

11 I think there's a point that's been missed here
12 today, and I want to bring it up as just that. I have
13 been asked over the years by the North Carolina Coastal
14 Federation -- I have been asked over the years by the
15 Pender Group -- I've been asked over the years by the
16 Sierra Club -- I've been asked over the years by dozens
17 of educational research institutions, public and
18 private -- I've been asked over the years by small
19 groups that had asked me to be an advocate for studies
20 by some of the elected officials or past elected
21 officials that are here so that we can better inform
22 ourselves where we were going with business and
23 development and issues like that.

24 What I'm amazed at -- what I'm amazed at is that
25 the issue here today is very simple. We're talking about

1 going and gathering information. In my previous career,
2 I had an office in the shadow of what was the -- works
3 at Lockheed, one of the most renowned, worldwide
4 renowned research and study organizations as where --
5 technology of unbelievable and tremendous advances took
6 place.

7 In our state, we're proud of the UNC system and
8 many other -- institutes we have that are all about
9 study and research, and that's where our decisions are
10 to come from. That's what I'm told by the Sierra Club
11 and all these organizations that come to me and ask me
12 for -- Curtis, advocate on our behalf, because our
13 research, our knowledge needs to be presented to our
14 elected officials so we as a people in this state, in
15 this country can make the right decision.

16 What I'm amazed at is we are here today debating
17 whether we should go seek knowledge. I am, and I
18 seriously mean that. That's what it's about. The course
19 of human events is always -- unfurled by trial and
20 error. That's what we've learned since we were kids.
21 Well, we're not going to understand trial and error
22 unless we study, and that's what I've been asked to do
23 as an advocate is to please study, then stand up for my
24 research, stand up for what I've learned, stand up for
25 my study, and I have done that.

1 Even as a conservative talk show host that is
2 often attacked for having a very narrow-minded approach
3 to many issues, I've always stood up for the environment
4 in North Carolina.

5 This issue's simple. We need information to
6 protect our environment, to protect our people, to
7 protect our economy and, beyond all of that, so that we
8 can move forward as a people. That's what research and
9 knowledge is about, to move forward as a people.

10 And we live in the greatest state in the United
11 States, and North Carolina has always led the way in
12 research and development -- studied important decisions.
13 I'm proud to be a North Carolinian, very proud, and we
14 need to move forward, and we need to study and we need
15 to do it responsibly, and then we need to be able to
16 make the right decision, an informed decision, not an
17 emotional decision.

18 So I advocate for what I've always been asked to
19 advocate for, study and research so we can make an
20 informed decision, and hopefully with your help, we can
21 do just that and finally, finally understand where we
22 are on this issue and what's best for our people in
23 North Carolina. Thank you.

24 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Yes, ma'am?

25 BY MS. SPENCER: I appreciate you all being here

1 today and everybody else that's taken time off to come
2 and support this important issue. My name is Janet
3 Spencer, and I live in Horry County, right across the
4 coast -- right across the state line, rather.

5 Our unemployment rate in Horry County is over
6 nine percent, and gas prices increase daily, and as
7 those gas prices increase, our tourism decreases, so it
8 affects our overall economy.

9 These United States of America should not be
10 dependent on foreign countries to supply us with a basic
11 need for gas and for oil, and I strongly encourage that
12 this testing go forward. Anything we can do, if it
13 doesn't lower the price of gas that much significantly,
14 at least we'll be paying that price to the United States
15 of America and not to some foreign country that really
16 doesn't like us a whole much. Thank you.

17 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Is there anyone else? Yes,
18 sir.

19 BY MR. NEUGEBAUER: Just real quick. Tom
20 Neugebauer again -- talking about the comments
21 previously -- just spoke about.

22 Now, as a geophysicist and being in this
23 business for over 30 years, I've been involved in the
24 acquisition, in processing, in the planning of projects.
25 The data that we have of -- East Coast is just not good

1 enough to do a proper evaluation of the Atlantic OCS --
2 the technologies that were used back in the '60s and
3 '70s and then given -- '83 -- that's the last year I
4 remember, maybe '84 -- the -- the type of equipment in
5 those -- the sources were just -- were just not
6 providing us with information that we needed -- we have
7 to understand it's our -- it's our -- it's our
8 responsibility to -- to us now, to our children later,
9 to our grandchildren to really understand the resource
10 potential in the Atlantic OCS.

11 We really don't know the -- prospects off the
12 coast of North Carolina -- has four TCF of natural gas,
13 four trillion cubic feet of natural gas -- tremendous
14 resource. It probably is -- it probably is more, but
15 what is needed is modern seismic testing. I can
16 show examples from 2000 to 2007 that can show you the
17 lift, and just that amount of time -- we're talking
18 about 2000. That's fairly modern seismic technology, and
19 then we're coming back to 2007 -- seismic data in that
20 same area when we show increase in illumination of
21 subsurface which eliminates the need for drilling -- you
22 want to reduce the risk, drill the least amount of -- as
23 you possibly can in order to achieve the maximum
24 resource potential.

25 We are now today -- as I speak, we are acquiring

1 again in that same area another seismic program because
2 we can improve the -- that much better. Just over the
3 last five years -- so here's a region -- in the Gulf of
4 Mexico where in the last 12 years we've acquired three
5 seismic -- seismic surveys which have now -- now
6 benefited industry and also government, because the BOEM
7 uses this information to give the proper resource
8 evaluation because it's their responsibility to the
9 American people, taxpayers to understand what the true
10 resource is for this -- for these hydrocarbons.

11 So the -- the responsibility is to the United
12 States to really do a full evaluation to fully
13 understand what we have offshore -- is we need to do
14 this, and in order to do it properly, we need to use the
15 most modern seismic techniques, and we have to do it in
16 a very environmentally responsible manner.

17 The change from when I worked offshore back in
18 the early '80s -- we didn't have MMOs -- or we didn't
19 have passive acoustic monitoring. These are techniques
20 we're using today and actually employ three, four people
21 in a vessel. We use -- to sense -- that are -- are off
22 -- that off the -- off the vessel -- location so that
23 we're not having that degree of -- impact to these
24 marine mammals, and so we have -- we have people
25 actually spending all day visually looking 360 around

1 this vessel for the -- and if there are mammals within
2 the exclusion zone, the operation is shut down. There
3 are very strict guidelines that the BOEM puts on the
4 industry in putting a seismic program together.

5 We -- we spend a lot of time working with BOEM
6 on permits, on environmental assessments which will be
7 carried out for every specific program, and today I just
8 wanted to just make that point, that the data we have --
9 and I have some examples if people -- in looking. It's
10 just not good enough to make that evaluation, and -- and
11 we owe it ourselves to understand fully what resources
12 we do have.

13 The question of drilling, the question of
14 production, that's another discussion that has to
15 happen, but we have to understand what do we have
16 offshore in North Carolina. What do we have offshore in
17 New Jersey? Questions have to be answered and have to be
18 answered with the best data that we can get our hands on
19 today.

20 So I thank you for the opportunity.

21 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Yes, sir?

22 BY MR. SPRUILL: I'm Jack Spruill again. Thank
23 you for allowing me to conclude the -- my comments. I
24 promise no more administrative questions.

25 My reasons for stating that offshore oil and gas

1 exploration and development is not in the public
2 interest with public policy for North Carolina is based
3 on onshore effects, so that's what I'm going to speak
4 to, not offshore issues, but onshore effects, and this
5 is based on my firsthand observation and knowledge from
6 living in New Orleans for nine years.

7 During that time period for six years, I did
8 management consulting in the oil and gas industry. For
9 four years, I was a Navy reserve officer assigned to a
10 destroyer, and one weekend a month we made the long, six
11 hour transit to the Gulf down the river and of course
12 back on -- Sunday afternoon, and I did recreational
13 fishing and still do from time to time from south of
14 Houma -- east to the Pearl River. I spent a lot of time
15 in those waters and observed the infrastructure that is
16 necessary in Louisiana in order to support offshore oil
17 and gas exploration and development, and I'd like to
18 give you a thumbnail sketch of that and at the same time
19 for the people that know the North Carolina coast to
20 start thinking in their mind's eye what -- how would
21 this fit on the coast of North Carolina. Would it be a
22 good marriage?

23 Now a few points about the infrastructure needed
24 in Louisiana and would, in turn, be needed in North
25 Carolina to support offshore exploration and

1 development. There have to be docking and loading
2 facilities to support large crew boats, mud barges and
3 work boats and storage capacity for the chemicals that
4 are needed in drilling and for the -- the -- drilling
5 the mud.

6 The boats that come into these -- into these
7 operating facilities are relatively deep draft, and so
8 dredging has to be done to create channels and mooring
9 space for them. Pipelines have to bring the product
10 ashore. Pipelines are almost always laid in canals in
11 shallow water through the marshes. Canals bring in high
12 salinity water into low salinity and freshwater. High
13 salinity kills plants that cannot thrive in that
14 salinity.

15 When plants die in the marshes and the wetlands,
16 the marsh breaks down. Valuable habitat gets destroyed.
17 The marsh disintegrates, creates silt. The silt goes on
18 top of oyster beds. Oysters smother and die.

19 Pumping stations and compressors are needed to
20 move the product through the pipelines. Gas treatment
21 plants are needed to do preliminary dehydration of the
22 gas and to separate out the valuable condensate which is
23 highly marketable. Sometimes -- are needed to flare
24 the -- or vent the unneeded or undesirable gasses into
25 the atmosphere or burn them. Storage tanks are needed

1 for condensate. All this also requires more boat docking
2 facilities and channels.

3 For oil production, there has to be tank farms
4 of 500 to 750 barrel tanks. Again, more -- boat and
5 barge docking facilities. And, of course, there are
6 occasional leaks and spills, and there are major spills
7 that happen after hurricanes. These large 570 -- 750
8 barrel tanks will rip loose and roll like crab floats
9 across the water. I've seen that. I know it goes on.

10 A big issue is boat wake created from work
11 boats and crew boats. These are, as I said, a -- large,
12 relatively fast boats. They have to be all weather --
13 obviously especially to go, you'd have to be -- to go
14 into the North Carolina coast where we often have much
15 heavier sea conditions than the coast off Louisiana. The
16 wakes these boats create are far in excess of any wakes
17 we see on the Intracoastal Waterway in North Carolina
18 from pleasure boats or from shrimpers.

19 BY MR. GOEKE: Sir, excuse me. May I ask a
20 question?

21 BY MR. SPRUILL: Yes.

22 BY MR. GOEKE: We were listening, because I want
23 to hear where you were headed with this.

24 BY MR. SPRUILL: Right.

25 BY MR. GOEKE: None of this has anything to do

1 with the proposal that we've written our EIS on. Do you
2 have additional comments on the EIS --

3 BY MR. SPRUILL: Yes, I do --

4 BY MR. GOEKE: If you could get to those, I would
5 appreciate it.

6 BY MR. SPRUILL: Could I just make a point? I
7 don't want to be argumentative, --

8 BY MR. GOEKE: I --

9 BY MR. SPRUILL: -- but I am the only speaker you
10 have interrupted and said that when people are talking
11 about national security and the economy -- you didn't
12 interrupt any of those and said this is not about this
13 geological and geophysical EIS.

14 Now, I've waited. I'm at the end, and I think I
15 deserve the same courtesy you allowed other speakers.
16 Fair enough?

17 BY MR. GOEKE: You've had a fair amount of time.
18 We really would like to bring it back to the topic at
19 hand.

20 BY MR. SPRUILL: Okay. Thank you. As I was
21 saying, the wakes created by these boats is far in
22 excess of any wake that we now have on our North
23 Carolina coast, and in -- in the transits down the
24 Mississippi, I can remember my 375 foot 2,200 ton
25 destroyer being shaken by the wake from these boats.

1 Fishermen and duck hunters out on the river that
2 passes in the bayou live in fear if they're out in -- in
3 poor visibility and -- and before dawn about being
4 trapped by these giant boat wakes with nowhere to go.
5 Where does this boat wake go as it rolls out from these
6 large boats? It crashes into the marsh.

7 Again, what happens, the marsh breaks down,
8 falls into the water, creates silt, goes in the oyster
9 beds, smothers and kills the oysters. This EIS needs to
10 speak to boat wake issues.

11 Now the North Carolina coast. Let's think about
12 how this overlays on the North Carolina coast.

13 BY MR. GOEKE: As it pertains to seismic --

14 BY MR. SPRUILL: Yes, exactly. We have only two
15 places on the North Carolina coast where there is heavy
16 commercial activity dependent on the water. One is the
17 state port in Morehead. The other is the state port here
18 in Wilmington. We have nothing at all like the
19 industrial infrastructure that's along the Louisiana
20 coast.

21 We have a few commercial fishing houses with
22 boat dockings and boat yards. We have boat marinas,
23 pleasure docks and ferry docks. Otherwise, the North
24 Carolina coast is characterized by wonderful natural and
25 state parks, thousands of acres of marshes, second only

1 to Louisiana, by the way, wetlands in the nation --
2 thousands of acres of marshes and wetlands that -- that
3 we hold sacred, shallow water sounds that are second to
4 none in the US, public access to all of our shorefront
5 below the high water lines, wonderful waterfront towns
6 like Southport, Beaufort, Manteo and Ocracoke Village.

7 We have permanent residents, second homes,
8 vacation homes, last, but not least, a hugely thriving
9 retail business that's serving second homes, tourism,
10 recreational and commercial fishermen. And I ask where
11 does this offshore exploration and the eventual drilling
12 and development fit into this model? I don't think it
13 fits in. This is a totally different inshore coastal
14 environment than is true in Louisiana.

15 I want to talk about the pipeline issue alone --

16 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Sir, there are no pipelines
17 associated with this proposed action. Please speak to
18 the issues that we are here to discuss.

19 BY MR. SPRUILL: -- have only two more points.

20 BY MR. GOEKE: There are no pipelines proposed --

21 BY MR. SPRUILL: I'm smart enough to know what
22 geological and geophysical exploration is.

23 BY MR. GOEKE: Yes, sir. That is what we are
24 talking about, geological and geophysical --

25 BY MR. SPRUILL: Pipelines from -- shore will not

1 come through our inlets, because our inlets have to be
2 dredged, and dredging and pipelines aren't compatible.
3 Therefore, the pipelines have to cross our barrier
4 islands, and crossing our barrier islands could create
5 geological instability where we already have this
6 exposure to breach -- our islands.

7 Let me just name a few of these islands and
8 think about this. There's Oak Island. There's Bald Head.
9 There's Masonboro. There's Wrightsville. There's Figure
10 Eight. There's Topsail. There's Shackleford Banks,
11 Ocracoke and Hatteras. Which of these islands make
12 sense to pass a pipeline over 'em? I say none of them.

13 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Excuse me, sir. We've given
14 you a very -- lot of time. We do have another lady in
15 the back who would like to speak. Ma'am, would you like
16 to speak?

17 BY MS. PRINCE: Hi. My name is Ann Prince, and
18 I'm from Myrtle Beach as well, and I do appreciate you
19 being here. I've listened to all -- everything that
20 everybody said today and I've made my notes.

21 One thing that comes to my mind, my simple mind,
22 I might add, is that in Genesis, God gave man dominion
23 over the animals, and while we are to protect them, I
24 don't believe -- allow them to take precedence over
25 human existence.

1 Since 1973, over 54 million babies have been
2 aborted, and without -- scientific information, I dare
3 say that the mammals, the lives of many -- birds or
4 anything else that would be effected by this don't come
5 any place close to that number. Thank you.

6 BY MR. BJERSTEDT: Is there anyone else? Upon --
7 information for commenting, you can pick up the fliers
8 on the way out or the address. All of these addresses
9 and hyperlinks, and with that, I would close the
10 meeting.

11

12 (Whereupon, the hearing was concluded at 3:22 p.m.)

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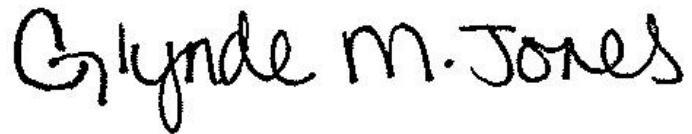
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CERTIFICATE

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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