

1 BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT
2 U.S DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
3 BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT

4 In Re: PUBLIC MEETING

5 Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement

6 Proposed Geological and Geophysical Activities
7 in the Mid and South Atlantic OCS Planning Areas

8 -----
9 Friday, April 27, 2012
10 Atlantic City, New Jersey
11 -----

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13 The Public Hearing held pursuant to notice,
14 taken before Maryellen DeFeo, Official Shorthand
15 Reporter and Notary Public in and for the County
16 of Atlantic, State of New Jersey, at the Atlantic
17 City Convention Center, One Convention Boulevard,
18 Atlantic City, New Jersey, 08401, on the above
19 date, commencing at 1:00 p.m.

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21
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1 APPEARANCES

2 PANEL MEMBERS:

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4 James Bennett,
5 Chief, Division of Environmental
6 Assessment

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8 Jill Lewandowski,
9 Protected Species Biologist

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11 Brian Jordan,
12 Federal Preservation Officer
13 and Headquarters Archeologist

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1 MR. BENNETT: Good afternoon, everyone.

2 Sorry for the delay, but we wanted to
3 make sure that everybody is registered.

4 I want to welcome you to this public
5 hearing on the Programmatic Environmental
6 Impact Statement that we've prepared
7 regarding geological and geophysical
8 activities in the Mid and South Atlantic.

9 My name is Jim Bennett. I'm chief of
10 the Division of Environmental Assessment at
11 the Bureau Headquarters of Ocean Energy
12 Management.

13 But safety first, I want to take a
14 minute to remind everyone that the exits to
15 this room in the event of an emergency is
16 that door there and there are stairs at the
17 exit.

18 Again, we are with the Bureau of Ocean
19 Energy Management. We are a bureau within
20 the United States Department of the
21 Interior, and we are here to take your
22 comments on the draft programmatic impact
23 statement.

24 However, we do have a number of people
25 here, subject matter experts. So, in

1 addition to hearing your concerns, if you
2 have questions or issues that you want to
3 discuss specifically with some of our
4 experts, we will be happy to do that after
5 the comment session. Those experts include
6 Jill Lewandowski, who's a marine biologist
7 with the headquarters office, Brian Jordan,
8 who's an archeologist also with our
9 headquarters office, Tamara Hark is also
10 here from our headquarters office, and Caren
11 Madsen is our public affairs individual. I
12 don't know if anyone from the bureau has had
13 the pleasure to touch base with her. But if
14 you tell her you're here, we'd appreciate
15 it.

16 We also have some people from CSA
17 International, who's our consulting firm
18 that's done a lot of work on the outer
19 continental shelf, and Kim Olson, who's the
20 deputy project manager, and Robin Sheridan,
21 who's outside at the table, I believe.

22 Okay.

23 Before we get to taking your comments,
24 we want to give you a very brief
25 presentation and give you an overview of

1 what the environmental impact statement is
2 and what it says.

3 And with that, I'm going to turn it
4 over to Jill Lewandowski.

5 MS. LEWANDOWSKI: Good afternoon,
6 everybody.

7 Thank you for coming to share your
8 thoughts and opinions with us. It's
9 definitely greatly appreciated.

10 I wanted to start by giving a little
11 background about the National Environmental
12 Policy Act process and the purpose of this
13 specific document.

14 Eventually, when we create this
15 document we have an action that's being
16 proposed to us, and what we'll do is we will
17 work with all the subject matter experts we
18 have within our organization, and we also
19 work with the experts that are in CSA
20 International. And we, essentially, take
21 the action that's in front of us with all
22 the different subject matter experts
23 anywhere from folks who are fish biologists,
24 forensic biologists, to archeologists, and
25 meteorologists, folks who have degrees in

1 economic issues, all those sorts of things,
2 and we assess in our resource area what we
3 think the potential impact from an action
4 can be, and then we also identify the sorts
5 of mitigations.

6 And then what we do is we present that
7 analysis two months later that we put
8 together as a draft EIS, and for the case of
9 this document, that was published on March
10 30th, and at that time we opened a 60 day
11 public comment period.

12 So, the next part of the process is the
13 part we are in right now where we ask the
14 public and all the stakeholders to take a
15 look at the document and let us know what
16 you think. Have we missed anything? Is
17 there information that we did not include
18 that you think we should? All those sorts
19 of things, and then throughout this comment
20 period, whether it's from the public meeting
21 or from written comments that are submitted,
22 at the end of that, which is May 30th, we
23 will then go through every single comment
24 and we will determine from there what sorts
25 of information have been raised that we

1 think we need to go back and take a look at,
2 and we will do that.

3 And then we'll also determine does that
4 make a change to the document? Is there
5 something that needs to be done?

6 And then when we issue a final EIS we
7 will, actually, include all those comments
8 in the EIS, the final EIS, and we'll include
9 our response to them so that you'll be able
10 to see when one issue is raised what our
11 response to the data is and if we made a
12 change to the document because of that.

13 And, again, that comes at the final EIS
14 stage.

15 That EIS then is used by our director
16 along with a number of other environmental
17 computations and other sorts of
18 considerations so that the director will
19 then make a decision on whether or not we
20 will move forward on this action, and if so,
21 which alternative would be the best and most
22 appropriate path forward.

23 And I'll get a little bit into the time
24 line when we move further along.

25 But this specific programmatic EIS is

1 for geological and geophysical surveys in
2 the Mid and South Atlantic, and I will show
3 you a map that will show you exactly what
4 areas we are talking about.

5 And we're, actually, in the public
6 meeting process. This is our last one. You
7 can see up there on the screen that we have
8 been to a number of cities. We tried to get
9 to whichever states potentially could be
10 effected by this action as well as also here
11 in New Jersey since you do border Delaware.

12 And you will see on the map, I'm going
13 to show you the sort of area of interest
14 where the line goes at the Delaware New
15 Jersey border.

16 Now, EIS, as I mentioned, gave us an
17 opportunity to look at the different actions
18 that were put forth in front of us, look at
19 the mitigation measures, determine what we
20 think the impact to all the different
21 resource areas can be and, importantly,
22 again, provide that in a written format for
23 public consumption so that you can see our
24 line of reasoning, our thinking, and respond
25 to that.

1 Right now we have since over the last
2 few years we have about eleven different
3 applications for seismic testing related to
4 oil and gas surveying. Up on the screen
5 here it gives you an idea of the areas that
6 have shown interest. And if it's darker, it
7 means that there is perhaps a bit of heavier
8 level of interest in surveying offshore. If
9 it's lighter, it really means it could be a
10 bit less.

11 So, we're going to give you an idea of
12 the areas that we have already received
13 interest. Those eleven applications plus
14 other potential applications that may come
15 in are considered part of our proposed
16 action, and this is what this next line will
17 talk about, as well as surveying that's
18 related to the development for siting of
19 renewable energy of infrastructure offshore
20 as well as the surveying that are related to
21 the sand and gravel program.

22 And that program is, basically, where
23 we may issue a lease offshore for someone to
24 access sand from the ocean bottom, but then
25 it's used in beach renourishment.

1 The elements when we're talking about
2 the different types of surveying that goes
3 on is the same general principle behind the
4 surveying no matter what the reason is for.
5 But, certainly, some surveying such as
6 looking for hydrocarbon resources are going
7 to be at a much larger geographic scale with
8 sound sources that perhaps could be more
9 intense than or larger than you would
10 actually find for a small scale survey that
11 might be just looking at a sand shelf for
12 beach renourishment.

13 But on the screen here you can see that
14 there are, let me get my pointer out, there
15 are a number of -- there's, actually, four
16 planning areas that we use on the Atlantic.
17 There's the North Atlantic, the mid, the
18 south, and there's also the straights of
19 Florida. The area of interest and what
20 we're just looking at right now is just the
21 Mid and South Atlantic planning area.

22 I mentioned that the proposed action is
23 on geological and geophysical activities.
24 Geophysical activities are, essentially, a
25 way to use various methods and sound sources

1 to, essentially, get a picture of sorts
2 below the substraight. You know, perhaps
3 immediately below if you are looking to
4 place infrastructure such as a wind farm.
5 You don't want to put it on top of a
6 shipwreck. You don't want to put it on top
7 of a potential gas pocket. Or it can go
8 further down if you're looking for things
9 that are further down into the ocean.

10 And the geological aspects are going to
11 be some, actually, pulling up some core
12 samples from the ocean floor, things that
13 actually would touch the bottom. And the
14 geophysical is more the noise that is used
15 to image the bottom.

16 We divide analysis into routine
17 operations and then accidental events.
18 Routine operations you can see listed up
19 here on the screen. Those are the things
20 that we anticipate would happen. We go
21 through each of those in the analysis for
22 all the different resource areas and we
23 determine what we think the potential range
24 of impact could be based on all of those
25 routine operations.

1 And then we also do consider accidental
2 events. So, in the case of this proposed
3 action we're really just talking about more
4 like fuel spills from a vessel would be what
5 we would analyze and what we have analyzed.

6 I mentioned that we go through lots of
7 resource areas. So, this is not a complete
8 list by any means, but it just gives you a
9 general idea, and we do have the expertise
10 folks that have degrees that have been
11 looking at those issues that are very
12 knowledgeable about each of these resource
13 areas.

14 And then, of course, we work with CSA
15 International. They also bring their
16 expertise.

17 There are three alternatives in the
18 EIS, and I'm going to go through each one of
19 them and then I will show you a really
20 simple table that does sort of show them all
21 together so you can get a feel for what the
22 comparison is between all three.

23 Briefly, Alternative A, basically,
24 would move forward with the proposed action
25 with certain mitigation measures in place,

1 and the first of those is going to be some
2 closure areas for the North Atlantic right
3 whale. We do feel, as most of you know,
4 that the right whale is one of the most
5 endangered marine mammal populations in the
6 world. There have been established areas
7 already by the National Marine Fishery
8 Service where they identify those are higher
9 use areas for right whales.

10 So, those are areas that in Alternative
11 A we would have time area closures meaning
12 certain times of the year when the whales
13 are there we would not move forward with any
14 surveys using air guns, but I do want to
15 make sure you understand the distinction
16 there of air guns. If you look through our
17 analysis, it's sort of the sound source that
18 we feel is most likely to have an effect on
19 these whales. There are other types of
20 sound sources that can be used on these
21 surveys that we don't feel rise to that same
22 level.

23 So, when we are talking about time area
24 closures, we're talking about for any
25 surveys that are wanting to use air guns.

1 If it is another sound source, we would
2 still consider those areas on a case by case
3 basis.

4 Also, in Alternative A, we would have a
5 number of practices that we have in other
6 areas such as the Gulf of Mexico and in the
7 Artic that we would also require here.

8 There's a suite of mitigation measures for
9 all seismic surveys that we do require.

10 And, briefly, and that is more detailed in
11 the document, but that would include
12 something along the lines of we would have
13 visual observers on the vessels and those
14 observers would establish a certain distance
15 from the vessel where we think the noise
16 level could potentially be disturbing to
17 marine mammals or to sea turtles. And if
18 the marine mammal or sea turtle enters that
19 zone, those observers would call for a shut
20 down of the operation.

21 Also, before operations start up those
22 observers spend about 30-to-45 minutes
23 clearing the zone making sure that any
24 marine mammals or sea turtles that might be
25 in the area, we will have noticed them

1 because they would have surfaced at least
2 once during that time period. And then that
3 can delay that because that zone has to be
4 cleared for that amount of time before
5 survey operations can start.

6 So, that's just some examples of the
7 sorts of things that we have in those
8 mitigation measures.

9 We also have measures for vessel strike
10 avoidance such as slowing your speed. Some
11 of these vessels are moving slow when
12 they're operating, but slowing their speed
13 when a whale is nearby, and also marine
14 trash debris awareness where we make sure
15 that things that are out there with the
16 vessels don't end up in the water.

17 Alternative B takes all the things
18 that's in Alternative A and then builds on
19 it a bit further. One of the things that it
20 does is we extend that time area closure,
21 and I'm going to show you a map of each of
22 these closures from Alternative A to
23 Alternative B in a moment, but we span that
24 all along the coast to provide some
25 additional areas for the migratory corridor

1 for the north atlantic right whale.

2 We also have a closure area in there
3 during a specific time of year for sea
4 turtles off of central Florida beause that's
5 a nesting area. And then we also have a
6 condition in there about separation between
7 vessels that may be out there operating at
8 the same time. And the idea is to expand
9 the distance between the vessels, you allow
10 more of a corridor for the animals to move
11 in between them.

12 And, also, Alternative B does require
13 passive acoustic monitoring and that,
14 essentially, is listening for the animals.
15 I mentioned in Alternative A as well as B,
16 they'll have visual observers out there
17 looking, but passive acuostic monitoring
18 would be in addition and we would be looking
19 and listening at the same time. And there's
20 a lot of technology out there and these
21 animals, many of them, are very vocal and
22 you can hear them and you can even detect a
23 noise and triangulate to determine about the
24 approximate distance to the vessel.

25 And, so, the shut down requirements

1 would also, they may be able to shut down,
2 basically, just from hearing an animal, not
3 just necessarily seeing an animal.

4 Alternative C would, basically, be no
5 action for any oil and gas that comes as
6 it's related to any surveys that come in,
7 and what it would be though is status quo
8 for removal of marine minerals.

9 So, I mentioned at the very beginning
10 that we do -- that there are the same kinds
11 of surveys, but when you're talking about
12 renewables or you're talking about sand and
13 gravel, they tend to be a much smaller
14 geographic area and the sound sources used
15 tend not to be air guns, although, that
16 could possibly be the case.

17 So, we have on a case by case basis
18 since we started this analysis considered
19 those as actions and we will continue to
20 consider them on a case by case basis under
21 Alternative B.

22 So, Alternative A, I mentioned the time
23 area closures. You can see them up here on
24 the screen. If you look further down here,
25 this is the right whale critical habitat and

1 these are the areas that NMFS has already
2 identified for seasonal closures. This is
3 about a twenty nautical mile distance off of
4 the shore lines, and here you can see the
5 dates where they would be in effect.

6 So, again, this is part of Alternative
7 A.

8 Alternative B, you will see the same
9 areas here. It's a little bit harder to see
10 though. In between there's this sort of
11 slash marked area. So, essentially, we
12 extended the closure area all along the area
13 of interest that we're looking at. And,
14 again, it was the twenty nautical miles from
15 the shore. And we've also added for sea
16 turtles off of Brevard County, Florida, a
17 time area closure there. And, again, these
18 closures are for seismic testing that's
19 using air guns.

20 And that's just a closer up photograph
21 or image of where the sea turtle nesting
22 area closure would be.

23 So, comparing all three alternatives,
24 the time area closure for right whales, we
25 would have the basic ones in there that the

1 National Marine Fishery Service has
2 prescribed for other activities in
3 Alternative A.

4 Alternative B, we would expand that to
5 extend through the whole action area.

6 Seismic survey protocols, those would
7 be the same in Alternative A and Alternative
8 B, and those protocols are talked about
9 within the draft EIS. You can get a chance
10 to see them in detail.

11 Passive acoustic monitoring would be
12 optional for A. In a case where industry
13 might want to use that is if they want to
14 start out at night where they can't see the
15 exclusion zone. And I mentioned before, you
16 have to be able to visually clear that
17 before you can start an operation.

18 So, that would be optional in A, but in
19 Alternative B it would be required.

20 The separation distance would not be in
21 A, but it would be in B.

22 And then the different protocols, and
23 that's the strike avoidance and the marine
24 debris awareness would be the same across
25 Alternative A and Alternative B.

1 This is just a very, very top level
2 look at the conclusions we came to at this
3 point from looking at all of the
4 information, and this is all in the draft
5 EIS, and our analyses for how we came to
6 these conclusions is detailed quite
7 thoroughly in there.

8 But you can see here that sea turtles
9 and marine mammals are the ones that get up
10 to, potentially, a moderate level of impact,
11 and we define what we mean by moderate
12 within the draft EIS. And this is not
13 surprising because these activities, for the
14 most part, do produce noise that does fall
15 within the hearing range of many marine
16 mammals certainly.

17 So, and that's just an overview of our
18 conclusions to date.

19 I would also like to point out that at
20 this programmatic EIS level there are some
21 other consultations that we do, and these
22 are listed at the top of the slide. For
23 example, the Endangered Species Act, we are
24 in consultation with the Fish and Wildlife
25 Service and the National Marine Fishery

1 Service, and they will look at our actions
2 and its effect on endangered species and any
3 designated critical habitat in the action
4 area and they'll let us know if they feel
5 that there is jeopardy to any of these
6 species. And, if not, they'll also let us
7 know if they think additional mitigation is
8 required.

9 We're also in consultation with the
10 United States National Fisheries
11 Conservation and Management Act, who will
12 also do a consultation called the essential
13 fish habitat consultation. I didn't include
14 that in there. But that's, essentially,
15 where you work with the National Fishery
16 Service and you look at all the fish areas,
17 which is generally most of the action area
18 that we're looking at there. They look at
19 the effect on the fish habitat, commercial
20 fisheries, and advise whether additional
21 mitigation is needed.

22 We do plan if a decision is made to
23 move forward and authorize the activities,
24 this program has documents with what we call
25 tier prompt. So, if we get another

1 application in or a specific application in
2 and we decide to process it, we would
3 actually do a project specific need that
4 would kind of fall from this analysis.

5 So, at that level we would also do
6 additional consultation. We would look at
7 the National Historic Preservation Act to
8 look for any potential impact to culture
9 resources and sort of spiritual resources
10 from Native Americans that might be in the
11 area. And we'll also have operators at that
12 point will also be required to get a
13 protection act authorization from the
14 National Marine Fishery Service.

15 And, essentially, that's something we
16 would build into any, that doesn't impact
17 the issue, but if we would build into any
18 requirement that any authorization we issue
19 that they would have to get that.

20 Again, the comment period ends May
21 30th. After that we'll spend a lot of time
22 looking at all of the comments that have
23 been received deciding what needs to be done
24 or changed within the document. Come
25 November this year, we will finalize the

1 document and present it to our director.
2 And come December of this year, the current
3 plan, where the director would make a
4 decision, a final decision, on what may or
5 may not happen as a result of this EIS.

6 And then just to remind you, we need
7 comments by May 30th. You can certainly
8 provide your comments here today orally, or
9 you can hand us a written comment. There's
10 an address on here, a mailing address, and
11 an E-mail where you can submit them before
12 May 30th.

13 And I would also like to point out that
14 we have a website for this project, and
15 that's listed on there. It should also be
16 in the materials that you picked up at the
17 front desk. And that website does show you
18 the different applications for oil and gas
19 that we have received. So, you can actually
20 pull them up and look at them. It has maps
21 in there. It has this document, of course,
22 on it.

23 There's a lot of fact sheets on there
24 that talk about the geological and
25 geophysical activities and what their

1 purposes are in the process. It talks about
2 the different consultations that we will go
3 under.

4 So, there's a lot more information
5 there that's perhaps a little bit easier to
6 consume than a very large document.

7 So, with that, I think we're done and
8 I'll turn it back to Jim.

9 MR. BENNETT: Thank you, Jill.

10 Again, we are here to get comments from
11 you, and we are about to begin the comment
12 session that specifically address the
13 contents of the draft EIS and how it could
14 be improved are what is most useful to this
15 process at this point in time.

16 I do have a list, and we have a number
17 of speakers. So, it is going to take a
18 little while, but we do ask that you limit
19 your comments to about three minutes per
20 speaker in the interest of making sure that
21 everybody has an opportunity to speak.

22 When you come up to the mic, please
23 state your name after you're called up and
24 please address your comments to the panel.

25 I would ask that we refrain from shout

1 outs and applause so as not to disrupt the
2 speaker.

3 With that, we'll get started. We do
4 have two officials here, who are first up,
5 and the first one is Frank Smoltz from the
6 Office of Senator Menedez.

7 MR. SMOLTZ: Good afternoon.

8 I have a letter that Senator Menendez
9 had asked me to read to you. I have a
10 letter on behalf of Senator Robert Menendez.

11 I write in opposition to the draft
12 Environmental Impact Statement to allow
13 seismic testing in the Mid Atlantic. The
14 only reason to allow seismic testing is to
15 later allow oil drilling and we do not need
16 oil spills on the Jersey Shore.

17 I find it interesting that part of the
18 supposed justification to allow this testing
19 is for renewable energy. Doing seismic
20 testing to site a wind turbine certainly
21 seems like overkill to me unless the
22 Department of Interior is aware of a wind
23 turbine so large that it needs to be
24 anchored miles under the ocean floor.

25 No, the real interest in seismic

1 testing is clearly about allowing oil
2 companies to try to drill off the east
3 coast, as close as Delaware waters. Such
4 drilling would threaten New Jersey's \$38
5 billion tourism industry, over half of which
6 is based in our four coastal counties, and
7 it will also threaten our robust commercial
8 and recreational fishing industries. When
9 trash washed up on the New Jersey Shore in
10 the 1980's it cost our tourism industry \$1
11 billion in revenue, and unlike trash, oil is
12 difficult to clean up. Over twenty years
13 after the Exxon Valdez disaster there's
14 still twenty thousand gallons of oil trapped
15 in the beaches of Alaska. We cannot and
16 will not allow that to happen to the Jersey
17 Shore.

18 Of course, seismic testing in and of
19 itself is problematic. Not only can it have
20 significant impacts on marine mammals, but
21 it has also been shown to negatively affect
22 nearby fisheries. Therefore, we should
23 oppose seismic testing both to preserve our
24 coastal economy and ecosystem now as well as
25 to protect it from potential oil spills in

1 the future.

2 Thank you for your consideration.

3 MR. BENNETT: Thank you.

4 Janice Fuller.

5 MS. FULLER: Hi, my name is Janice
6 Fuller.

7 Thank you for having a public hearing.
8 I am glad that the public has this
9 opportunity to inform and share public
10 comments on the performance of offshore
11 drilling.

12 I am totally opposed to offshore
13 drilling off the Atlantic Coast. My
14 opposition includes any preparatory steps
15 including seismic testing of our waters off
16 the Atlantic Coast.

17 The time and resources that the
18 Department of Interior is allocating for
19 seismic testing could be better used on
20 higher priorities that will allow us to move
21 away from dirty tools and gain faster,
22 easier independence through renewable
23 energy.

24 We all know how important New Jersey's
25 beaches are not only for our residents and

1 our tourists, but also for our state. Our
2 beaches are a tremendous resource so that we
3 can come here and enjoy them and they are a
4 huge economic engine for our state. They
5 are a primary framework of our tourism
6 industry that provides nearly five hundred
7 thousand jobs and generates \$38 billion to
8 our economy.

9 Seismic testing is the first step in
10 the direction of opening for gas and oil
11 drilling. We are opposed to deep water
12 drilling like this deep water project. Yet
13 in the two years since the BP spill, nothing
14 was recommended by the National Commission
15 on the Deep Water Horizon oil spill and
16 offshore drilling that has been put in
17 place. There have been no improvements in
18 worker's safety regulations that will help
19 insure that another blow out will not cost
20 eleven people's lives.

21 We need to increase enviromental review
22 and planning that will employ valuable
23 fishing wells and other renewable
24 resources. The Department of Interior must
25 halt this process and reconsider its

1 priorities. The process you're embarking
2 upon will have severe consequences on our
3 ocean environment and our deep water marine
4 resources in the short and long-term.

5 Thank you for listening to my comments
6 and I hope this council will fully consider
7 the public input here today.

8 MR. BENNETT: Thank you.

9 We have some pre-registered speakers.

10 The first one is Shawn Dickson.

11 MR. DICKSON: Good morning. My name is
12 Shawn Dickson, and I just wanted to say that
13 the clapping will not distract me.

14 So, go right ahead.

15 My name is Shawn Dickson, and I wanted
16 to start by mentioning two things that were
17 raised in the preamble.

18 First, I used to be a fish observer. I
19 worked in Alaska and I was sent out by the
20 government as a fisherman to spot whales,
21 and sea lions, and seals, and I can tell you
22 that if it's at all foggy, cloudy, stormy,
23 rainy, windy, or otherwise not a sunny day,
24 you are not able to see anything in the
25 ocean.

1 Saying that you're going to go out
2 there and look for turtles and whales before
3 you start is a very not wise way to go about
4 running an agency.

5 I also wanted to mention that it was
6 disappointing to hear that the only reason
7 that hearings were going to be held in New
8 Jersey today were because we're next to
9 Delaware. I can tell you that seismic
10 surveys anywhere on the coast are going to
11 be heard in our waters. There should be
12 hearings in New York, Massachusetts,
13 Connecticut, Rhode Island, and everywhere in
14 between.

15 So, let me get to my comment. I first
16 wanted to mentioned that we will be
17 expanding on our comments in more detail in
18 a written comment by the deadline,
19 hopefully, but I wanted to get right in by
20 saying that you view this EIS as, quote,
21 providing a balanced forum for early
22 identification to avoid (inaudible).

23 Here in this forum, I can tell you that
24 directly this impact statement does not
25 accomplish that goal. Commercial and

1 recreational fisheries will be impacted.
2 Divers and boaters will suffer. The coastal
3 economy and the coastal tourism of which a
4 lot of the communities depend on will
5 suffer. There are conflicts that you can
6 avoid in the EIS, and I can tell you that
7 you don't.

8 Moving forward with these seismic
9 surveys can only lead to more oil drilling.
10 It is not avoiding conflict. It's saying
11 that you've placed more weight on our oil
12 future than on our clean coastal future.

13 On the issue of oil, a lot of people
14 have said including the preamble of this
15 conversation today that this isn't just to
16 help oil drillers, that it will also help
17 renewable energy, sand mining, mineral
18 mining, and production as well.

19 Directly from the EIS, it says eleven,
20 it says nine, but now eleven permit requests
21 for these surveys, quote, in support of oil
22 and gas exploration, and the industry as
23 well as Members of the House of
24 Representatives have expressed interest in
25 getting oil and gas development in the

1 Atlantic Ocean.

2 So, therefore, this is about oil
3 drilling. That result is simply
4 unsuccessful. On renewables, as the
5 Senator's statement mentioned, doesn't offer
6 a wind facility even though we need an oil
7 and gas reservoir. No. Do sand mine
8 companies? No. Those are the things that
9 you don't need seismic testing for.

10 The major here is the big oil and the
11 Bureau of Ocean Energy Management are hiding
12 behind renewables. This is a programmatic
13 EIS. I mean, everything in here will be
14 approved. As you mentioned before, the
15 expressed interest in oil and gas here, the
16 wind facilities including four hundred
17 square miles off of New Jersey have already
18 mapped out, they already know where they're
19 going, in fact, they've already applied to
20 put things in those locations, they know
21 what they're doing.

22 Sand mining is on schedule. It happens
23 every year. We know this. And none of it
24 needs to find oil and gas reservoirs below
25 the sea floor.

1 Jill even mentioned earlier that these
2 eleven proposals for enhanced oil and gas
3 would be for G&G surveys, that Alternative C
4 keeps the status quo for renewable and
5 mineral mining. So, if that's the case,
6 then it's simply a situation where this EIS
7 and the oil companies that want to support
8 it are hiding behind a veneer of renewables
9 in sand mining. Alternative C will allow
10 those activities to go forward. Alternative
11 A and B are for oil.

12 As the agency stated in their executive
13 summary of the EIS, the concern that gave
14 rise to this push for seismic surveys was
15 that existing data was perceived to be,
16 quote, inadequate for business decisions to
17 lease development for oil. My concern and
18 the concern of the people in this room is
19 that these surveys and the oil drilling that
20 will directly result are the inadequate
21 decisions. They endanger the lives,
22 livelihoods, and resources of our clean
23 ocean economy.

24 The only option here that balances the
25 needs and uses of the ocean and the

1 interests of the people that live here is
2 Alternative C, the no action alternative.
3 The people of this region have been working
4 for years to find the right balance of use,
5 conservation, and enjoyment of the ocean and
6 have come up with legislation called the
7 Clean Ocean Zone written by the people that
8 live here and the users of the clean ocean
9 to protect it permanently.

10 Thank you, very much.

11 MR. BENNETT: Thank you.

12 Heather Stafford.

13 MS. STAFFORD: Good afternoon. My name
14 is Heather Stafford, and I'm a staff
15 scientist for the Clean Ocean Act.

16 Based on my review of the EIS, I'm very
17 troubled by the fact that BOEM seems to be
18 walking the line minimizing potential and no
19 impact and making decisions without fully
20 knowing what they'e going to lead to.

21 Alternative C, which does not allow for
22 oil and gas exploration, is the only
23 scientifically defensible option that
24 protects the ocean, the fishermen, the
25 surfers, and the clean coastal economy that

1 has developed in this oil free ocean
2 business.

3 Of the many scientific concerns I have
4 for this EIS, I'm most troubled by the under
5 estimation of impact and the many data it
6 gives. For example, there are scientific
7 data, some identified, that I've brought to
8 the attention of this agency over thirty
9 years ago on understanding the impact of
10 seismic surveys on our environment. These
11 data gaps are frustratingly left unfulfilled
12 even after BOEM, EOI, and other agency
13 scientists themselves called for more
14 research intruding on the seasonal
15 distribution of the ocean communities,
16 migration impact, spawning periods,
17 biological responses to air damage, and
18 overall impact for species ranging in size
19 from tiny plants to whales.

20 Information's lacking on the impact of
21 noise on turtles, whales, fish, dolphins,
22 and more. In fact, one could ask is there
23 enough science to indicate the significant
24 impact from air gun surveys? And, yes,
25 there definitely is. Yet the Federal

1 agencies have put their heads in the sand
2 and decided that the less they look, the
3 more they will be able to get away with.

4 The determination of air gun impact is
5 highly questionable in this EIS. There are
6 substantial reasons for concern about the
7 harm that air gun blasts have on tiny,
8 little creatures, to plants, to whales.
9 Marine life depends on sound to survive.

10 Air guns can stun and disrupt animal
11 behavior including causing large avoidance
12 over large areas. Fish have suffered
13 internal injuries, hemorrhaging, and
14 auditory damage, even death at intense noise
15 levels. You know this. Fish hatcheries
16 have decreased by forty to eighty percent in
17 areas with seismic surveys.

18 According to one report from your
19 agency, there is concern that this amount of
20 noise pollution is already stunning the
21 ability of whales to communicate. The PEIS
22 indicates that millions of marine mammals
23 will suffer over the eight year period of
24 these surveys and beyond. Stranding of
25 whales, dolphins, and even giant squid have

1 occurred in areas where there's air gun
2 blasting with animals showing noise related
3 injuries.

4 All of these impacts really must be
5 considered and taken seriously. In 2010
6 when BOEM first proposed testing we asked
7 BOEM to conduct a base line survey of noise
8 levels in the region so that the
9 environmental impact could be differentiated
10 from existing noise such as from shipping
11 and Department of Defense testing and
12 training activities.

13 We also asked BOEM to assess cumulative
14 impact on adding seismic surveys to this
15 already noisy ocean region. The only
16 response was to affirm that data was
17 lacking.

18 The National Oceanic Administration has
19 already petitioned to expand habitat
20 protection of right whales, one of the most
21 critically endangered species in the world.
22 Yet this review process is still ongoing,
23 but to protect whale and turtle habitat this
24 whole process should be ended. If the
25 agency plans on ignoring those gathered here

1 today as well as habitat impact, then go
2 ahead and choose another alternative other
3 than Alternative C.

4 Thank you.

5 MR. BENNETT: Thank you.

6 Cindy Ziff.

7 MS. ZIFF: You are here at the real
8 Jersey Shore, home of Jersey pride where we
9 fiercely defend our ocean.

10 My name is Cindy Ziff. I'm Executive
11 Director of Plain Ocean Action, and for 25
12 years, we as a coalition of women's groups,
13 fishing groups, student groups, boating,
14 diving, fishing, surfing, just loving the
15 ocean group have fought and defended our
16 ocean from ocean dumpers, like, sewage
17 floods, and nuclear waste, and industrial
18 waste. All of these were sanctioned by our
19 government, and we fought back. We fought
20 back and we cleaned up the ocean. We ended
21 ocean dumping. We fought back against
22 offshore pollution discharge in our ocean.
23 We fought back against the raw sewage coming
24 off our beaches. We fought back when we had
25 dead and dying dolphins washing up on our

1 beaches.

2 And now you come here and suggest that
3 you're going to blast our ocean with noise
4 loud enough to kill. We are offended. We
5 have worked hard to keep our ocean clean and
6 we want to keep it that way. Today our
7 collective voices have a strong bipartisan
8 of elected officials, a force of elected
9 officials, that are opposed to offshore
10 drilling and that want to keep our ocean
11 clean. Our Governor is opposed to offshore
12 drilling.

13 And the proposal that you are
14 considering will impact our coast and you're
15 going to hear from many of these
16 representatives of boaters, divers, and
17 swimmers here today about how this is going
18 to impact them.

19 The Department of Interior not only is
20 looking at this, but the Department of
21 Interior seems chomping at the bit to do
22 this. The enthusiastic presentation
23 presented by Secretary Salazar announcing
24 this proposal was extremely disturbing. The
25 only purpose of this hostile act is to

1 facilitate the more harmful oil and gas
2 industry. We are most stunned by the
3 appalling proposal in light of President
4 Obama's recent National Ocean Policy where
5 he declared and established a National Ocean
6 Policy to insure the protection,
7 maintenance, and restoration of the health
8 of the ocean, coastal, and great lakes
9 systems and resources.

10 Among the policy's priorities are
11 improved decision making, enhanced ecosystem
12 protection, and the application of
13 precautionary principles.

14 With the ink barely dry, the Department
15 of Interior deep sixed these National Ocean
16 Policy goals and then tossed the Atlantic
17 Ocean to big oil. First, in pursuing this
18 EIS, the Department of Interior puts big
19 oil, the most profitable corporation in the
20 history of mankind, interests ahead of
21 public interest. That's not improved
22 decision making. It's inconsistent also
23 with enhanced ecosystem protection goals of
24 the National Ocean Policy.

25 By succumbing to big oil pressure, the

1 Department of Interior abandons the National
2 Ocean Policy of improved collaboration
3 decision making and ignores the voices of
4 millions of citizens.

5 Third, making decisions without truly
6 knowing what impact will occur defies the
7 National Ocean Policy's commitment to the
8 precautionary principles, which is if you
9 don't know, you don't do it.

10 Just imagine a noise going off that
11 would irritate your eardrums, the sound of
12 an air horn going off, the sound of nails on
13 a chalk board, the sound of dynamite going
14 off, and put this under a magnifier, that's
15 what you're going to be blasting into the
16 ocean. At least we would have the option to
17 walk away and demand it be stopped.

18 The marine life is innocent, and are
19 clueless, and are helpless to stop. They're
20 going to be maimed and killed.

21 In sum, this plan does not represent
22 good government nor adherence transparency
23 and good science. This plan to blast the
24 ocean from Florida to New Jersey must stop
25 now. Alternative C is the only choice.

1 Leave the Atlantic alone. We want a clean
2 ocean zone.

3 MR. BENNETT: Thank you.

4 Margarte Messner Jackson.

5 MS. JACKSON: It's Margaret Messner
6 Jackson, and I'm the confirmation chair of
7 the Club of Ocean County that is here
8 bordering the Atlantic Ocean.

9 I have to say, first of all, I'm angry,
10 and angry is not really what describes how I
11 feel. And I represent the Ocean County
12 Members.

13 Because it seems like that there is
14 absolutely no forethought into the future,
15 and it seems to be a thing, well, we have to
16 have this now.

17 No, we don't.

18 The ocean is not a dump site. It is
19 not something to be explored for research,
20 construction, or anything like that. There
21 is life form living there. Without the
22 ocean, we would not be able to exist because
23 it gives life to people just as well as the
24 land.

25 They have been using the ocean for a

1 nuclear waste dump site for nerve gases that
2 have been discovered here not too long ago,
3 a few years ago, and ammunition has been
4 pulled out of the ocean in the past during
5 beach replenishment.

6 Something is wrong with all this
7 planning that comes out of Washington. This
8 is not right. I would just like to ask you
9 where is NOAA here?

10 The other ones that represented the
11 fishery interests and the scientists are the
12 animal speakers that we have out there. The
13 oil spill that was connected to drilling by
14 Shell off the coast of West Africa was never
15 cleaned up, and we see horrible pictures
16 coming out of the Gulf of Mexico from BP.
17 BP also had spills in the Alaska pipeline
18 that have been discovered and nothing has
19 been cleaned up there.

20 It is, basically, still no matter if
21 you're drilling for oil or if you're testing
22 for gas it is still a fossil fuel. We have
23 to get away from fossil fuel and we have to
24 get something else in place. We have energy
25 in terms of solar. There are other possible

1 forms of energy.

2 I work together with scientists from
3 Rutgers University from the Jacque Cousteau
4 Center with members of energy emergency
5 management from their insurance company, and
6 we all agree that there is a direct
7 connection of the fossil fuel and sea level
8 rising because of global warming. I worked
9 on a draft by Rutgers University to show how
10 far the sea level rising is going to impact
11 the coastline of New Jersey. If you do
12 anymore with this exploration offshore for
13 oil and gas, that is not clean energy
14 either. And to say that it is renewable is
15 laughable. It's not a renewable thing.

16 It had been touched on before that if
17 you would drill and test off the coast of
18 Virginia, it didn't come up here and affect
19 your way of life. Whether it's Maryland,
20 whether it's Delaware, or New Jersey, or
21 even New York, the Gulf stream even will
22 bring oil here, and they won't even clean it
23 up. There is no way you can mitigate these
24 things. There is no other place to go.

25 So, needless to say, it affects our

1 fishing, it affects the animals, and
2 something needs to be done. The seismic
3 testing you have described along the
4 Atlantic coastline, and that does not
5 include Florida, it would require within the
6 continental shelf affect forty three
7 million plants with these boats or ships
8 when they pound them into the ground.

9 I wouldn't want to live there. I
10 wouldn't want to be near a place where they
11 keep drilling things up. What do you think
12 it does to the fish and wildlife out there?
13 The fishermen are already complaining that
14 their fishing hatcheries are in danger.
15 It's their livelihood. You saw what
16 happened in the Gulf of Mexico to the
17 coastline.

18 So, it is absolutely impossible for you
19 to do anything with it. Do you have any
20 idea of the domestic situations in schools?
21 Do you know how the sounds travel in salt
22 water? It stretches over fifteen hundred
23 meters. These are long ways, and they can't
24 get away. The animals couldn't get away.
25 And you say that you want to close up a

1 certain area here because of endangered
2 habitat. That's ludicrous. What do you
3 want to do, put signs up there not for
4 turtles, no turtle crossing, or something
5 like that?

6 So, you're going to get a written
7 comment too.

8 Thank you, very much.

9 MR. BENNETT: Thank you.

10 David Gregory Orgamba.

11 MR. ORGAMBA: Yes. My name is David
12 Gregory Orgamba, and I'm the Chairman of the
13 Ocean County New Jersey Marine issues, and
14 I'm also the state coordinator for marine
15 issues.

16 Let's face it, this is not an academic
17 exercise. It's not being done to study
18 something. This is the camel's nose under
19 the tent. This is the first step of getting
20 us on the road to opening up all these areas
21 for oil and gas exploration.

22 And, certainly, one of the previous
23 comments mentioned the fact that cutting off
24 in terms of the hearings at New Jersey
25 really is not proper because the impact from

1 seismic testing alone is going to extend
2 hundreds of miles. So, talking about
3 something like testing off of Virginia is
4 going to have an impact way beyond New
5 Jersey in any event.

6 What I would also just like to mention
7 is that in terms of including renewables in
8 this package is a little more than a fig
9 leaf, and let's get serious here. Frankly,
10 it's offensive from an environmental
11 standpoint to try and use renewables to
12 somehow justify this program, but every
13 decision that is made in politics and
14 government involves a balance, same thing
15 with this here. When we weigh the equities
16 and look at the potential damage to marine
17 life, and when you look at the potential
18 damage to property value, when you look at
19 the potential damage to our tourism
20 industry, and when we balance the potential
21 impact down the road maybe a few pennies on
22 the gallon, I think the equities are pretty
23 clear there.

24 What I really wanted to do today was
25 invite everybody in this room, including the

1 panel, over to my house for a Louisiana
2 fish boil, no charge, and of course I'm
3 being facetious. But if I wasn't being
4 facetious, how many people in this room
5 would actually want to take me up on that
6 invitation?

7 We have fish in the Gulf that are being
8 born without eyes. We have fish in the Gulf
9 that have serious lesions that are related
10 to petroleum products. Imagine if we have
11 that same type of tragedy occur here in New
12 Jersey. What would happen to the commercial
13 fishing industry? What would happen to the
14 recreation that we enjoy?

15 The bottom line is we can't find our
16 way out of the problem. In terms of I'm not
17 going to dissect the EIS, I just want to give
18 a general comment. It strikes me, and I am
19 sure everybody who worked on this has done
20 the best job that they can, but it strikes
21 me as showing a tremendous amount of
22 humerous to think we can micromanage the
23 ocean, and micromange marine life, and
24 micromange our fisheries. We're going to
25 stop and put up signs so we can do stuff.

1 In terms of the right whale, let me
2 just say this, scientists who spend their
3 whole lives studying the right whales,
4 there's only something like 350 left on the
5 planet, they don't even know where they
6 are. They lose track of these mammals even
7 though they have I.D.'d and named every one
8 of them.

9 So, for us to try to assume that we can
10 have this program across the entire East
11 Coast and be able to micromange that program
12 in such a way that we won't have what the
13 EIS says, a minimal impact on marine life
14 across the board and in terms of saying big,
15 it just shows a tremendous amount of
16 humorous.

17 The only sound policy is Alternative C.
18 Thank you.

19 MR. BENNETT: Thank you.

20 Alison Chase.

21 MS. CHASE: My name's Alison Chase, and
22 I'm a Policy Analyst at the Natural
23 Resources Defense Council.

24 On behalf of NRDC's more than 1.3
25 million members and online activists

1 nationwide, we strongly urge the
2 administration to choose Alternative C, the
3 no action alternative, and keep dangerous
4 oil and gas exploration off the Atlantic
5 Coast.

6 The seismic surveys designed to
7 estimate the size of oil and gas reserves
8 wreak havoc in the marine world. To search
9 for oil and gas, ships tow multiple airgun
10 arrays that emit tens of thousands of high
11 decibel explosive impulses to map the
12 surrounding areas. Excluding explosions,
13 airgun arrays emit the loudest human
14 generated noise in the oceans. This intense
15 sound causes hearing loss, injury, and death
16 to nearby animals. Moreover, it can
17 seriously disrupt animal behavior far beyond
18 the immediate testing area. Overwhelmed by
19 the sounds of seismic noise, fish and marine
20 mammals become unable to rely on their sense
21 of sound to find mates, locate prey, avoid
22 predators, and communicate.

23 For example, airgun noise is loud
24 enough to mask whale calls over literally
25 thousands of miles destroying their capacity

1 to communicate and breed. It can drive
2 whales to abandon their habitat and cease
3 foraging, again, over vast areas of ocean.
4 A single airgun array in the North Atlantic
5 caused endangered fin and humpback whales to
6 stop singing, a behavior essential to their
7 mating and foraging, and abandon habitat
8 over an area more than one hundred thousand
9 square miles.

10 According to the administration's own
11 estimates, if this testing goes ahead, over
12 the next eight years seismic exploration
13 would injure up to 138,500 marine mammals
14 and disrupt marine mammal feeding, calving,
15 breeding, and other vital activities more
16 than 13.5 million times.

17 Airguns have been known to displace
18 commercial species of fish on a massive
19 scale over thousands of square kilometers.
20 The result has been to dramatically depress
21 catch rates of species such as cod, haddock,
22 and rockfish across areas as large as Rhode
23 Island. Fishermen in Norway and other parts
24 of the world have been so affected by
25 seismic exploration that they have sought

1 compensation from industry for their losses.

2 And these surveys will be occurring at
3 and around some of the Atlantic's most
4 incredible submarine canyons. Cut into the
5 Atlantic's Continental Shelf is a series of
6 vast undersea canyons starting just north of
7 Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, and running
8 up past Cape Cod. These special places host
9 an amazing variety and abundance of marine
10 life from deep sea corals, rare sponges, and
11 vivid anemones, to fish, and shellfish, to
12 endangered sperm whales, dolphins, and other
13 marine mammals.

14 The seismic surveying called for in
15 this PEIS would, at the least, immediately
16 impact the marine life of Baltimore,
17 Accomac, Washington, and Norfolk Canyons.
18 These are truly special places. Norfolk
19 Canyon, for example, is believed to
20 represent the southern most outpost of fauna
21 associated with boreal red coral and was
22 nominated for national marine sanctuary
23 status in 1975.

24 The only reason to look for oil and gas
25 deposits is if you want to develop them.

1 This means that the data learned by testing
2 will likely result in oil and gas rigs
3 springing up along the Atlantic seaboard.
4 Oil exploration and development would impact
5 the coastal communities that rely on healthy
6 ocean resources.

7 For example, here in New Jersey there
8 are more than 46,000 fishing industry jobs,
9 more than \$1.4 billion in recreational
10 fishing sales, and more than \$5.8 billion in
11 commercial fishing sales.

12 NRDC calls on the administration to
13 choose Alternative C.

14 Thank you.

15 MR. BENNETT: Thank you.

16 Jeff Fiddle.

17 MR. FIDDLE: Thank you.

18 Jeff Fiddle, Director for New Jersey CR
19 Club, and I'm here representing hundreds of
20 thousands of members in the state, but also
21 the one point four million residents.

22 You know, quite frankly, part of the
23 proposal sounds pretty good. Everyone in
24 New Jersey likes to get blasted when they're
25 down the shore, except it's in a bar, not in

1 the ocean. And for all of us the Jersey
2 Shore is what makes New Jersey New Jersey,
3 and the only film crew we want to see
4 filming something down here is a crew
5 filming the Jersey Shore and not an oil
6 spill. And I'm concerned that with this
7 proposal that's what will happen down the
8 road because before you can spill oil, you
9 first have to test to find out where it is.
10 No test, no spill, very simple.

11 We are very concerned about this
12 proposal because we think, quite frankly,
13 that it turns the moratorium that's in place
14 into a joke because if it takes five years
15 to do testing to confirm it, then the
16 moratorium will be gone by then. So, for us
17 we see this as a first step toward drilling
18 off our coast. And whether it's drilling
19 off New Jersey or off of Delaware, it all
20 ends up here.

21 Virginia's less than a hundred nautical
22 miles away. One of the proposals that
23 happened a few years ago in Virginia, they
24 wanted to land the oil in New Jersey. And,
25 so, for us we see this drilling as a

1 slippery slope.

2 We're also concerned about what will
3 happen to the fisheries and to the marine
4 mammals and so forth when the testing goes
5 on. And I'm someone old enough to kind of
6 remember the sonic boom, and I remember what
7 would happen before they were banned across
8 the United States what it felt like. That's
9 what's happening in the ocean. It would be
10 happening every few seconds if you do that.

11 To us, for the people in the room, it's
12 sort of like trying to be in an airplane
13 that's landing when you have a head cold.
14 Think about the pain that it brings, and
15 that's what this is really about for those
16 species. Not only will it impact them, but
17 it will chase them away and hurt our fishing
18 industry here in New Jersey.

19 So, we think that this proposal is
20 wrong for the right whale, and it's wrong
21 for the people of New Jersey, and it's wrong
22 for the people in the United States. We
23 believe that trying to say that this is
24 being used somehow for renewable energy is
25 sort of like trying to justify eating a hot

1 fudge sundae because there's a cherry on top
2 and it's a piece of fruit. It has nothing
3 to do with it. It's a rationalization.
4 It's an excuse.

5 If you were looking for places to put
6 offshore winds, it's like killing mosquitos
7 with a halyard. In fact, it's like a
8 halyard in the water.

9 And, so, for us, we are concerned that
10 we're at a very important time in this
11 country when we can go down the road and
12 clean energy and offshore winds will
13 continue with the fossil foolishness in the
14 past for offshore oil. We want wind off our
15 coast, not oil, and we believe that this
16 proposal interferes with putting renewable
17 energy off the coast, and we believe that
18 this will hurt New Jersey's forty billion
19 dollar a year tourism industry.

20 And here in Atlantic City, we want to
21 make sure that seismic testing doesn't chase
22 away the whales, and in this case, the
23 gamblers and all the people that come down
24 the Jersey Shore. We believe that this
25 proposal will lead to that because, quite

1 frankly, if there's a threat of oil spills
2 or the potential for oil spills, people will
3 go other places. There's a lot more money
4 to be made in New Jersey from tourism than
5 to be made from potential offshore
6 drilling.

7 Economically, we don't think it's
8 feasible. We have enough winds off our
9 coast to meet more than half of New Jersey's
10 future electrical needs. That's the
11 direction we should go. If we have a choice
12 between winds and a choice to drill for oil,
13 we choose winds. And under current rules,
14 it's easier to put oil off our coast than
15 wind mills, and we think that should be
16 changed and this PEIS should be, basically,
17 withdrawn.

18 We choose Alternative C, but we really
19 mean this whole proposal should be
20 withdrawn.

21 I just wanted to add that when we go to
22 the Shore in the Summertime and we have our
23 plans, you know, we want to taste olive oil,
24 not crude oil when we go down the shore. We
25 want to make sure that this place is here

1 for future generations, and our concern is
2 that this proposal will lead to the end of
3 the moratorium and will lead to drilling,
4 and, for us, test baby test, and drill baby
5 drill is still, basically, the same.

6 When you listen to America the
7 Beautiful it says from sea to shining sea,
8 not sea to oily sea.

9 And, so, we believe that we have to
10 stop this proposal to protect our coastline
11 for future generations and go to a green
12 energy economy instead.

13 Thank you, very much.

14 MR. BENNETT: Thank you.

15 Jack McQue.

16 MR. McQUE: Good afternoon. My name's
17 Jack McQue. I'm the Citizen Action
18 Coordinator for Clean Ocean Action.

19 Every day my job is to work with the
20 citizens, businesses, and communities along
21 the coast of New York and New Jersey. In my
22 work, I constantly hear from them how
23 devastating offshore oil and gas drilling
24 would be for their bottom line, for their
25 public health, for their livelihood.

1 In the programmatic environmental
2 statement the thing that worries me the most
3 is the fact that every decision made by BOEM
4 seems to be the wrong one. First, occurring
5 with BOEM Alternative A is preferred to find
6 the oil, map out where to put the rigs.
7 Now, BOEM is saying here that we've studied
8 the environmental impact. We've decided to
9 quickly and dangerously find as much oil as
10 we can so that we can get to work extracting
11 it.

12 An objective examination of the
13 environmental impact statement could never
14 lead someone to decide that more, faster,
15 less safe surveys is the best choice.

16 Alternative B would mean more
17 protection to the critically endangered
18 North Atlantic right whale, more protection
19 to endangered turtles, and more prohibitions
20 against a too dense survey tract than
21 Alternative A. Yet, the agency decided not
22 to choose this.

23 In short, Alternative B is Alternative
24 A with more protection for the marine
25 environment. Why this wasn't preferred is

1 beyond me, but I suspect these minor added
2 protections would cut into the profit of the
3 richer than anyone in history big oil
4 companies.

5 Third and finally, BOEM chose to ignore
6 the most significant part of the no action
7 alternative, the value and the benefit to
8 siting clean ocean economies and an energy
9 extraction free future. In developing the
10 no action alternative, BOEM could and should
11 have spent twenty pages of analyses rather
12 than billions of dollars that commercial
13 fishing generates, billion of dollars spent
14 on recreation from tourism, and sport
15 fishing, to surfing, and swimming, the
16 billions of dollars spent in coastal
17 communities each year.

18 These are the benefits of the no action
19 alternatives that will be gravely threatened
20 by these surveys, bu the oil drilling that
21 follows these surveys, and by the change in
22 the Atlantic Ocean status quo this PEIS
23 represents. Our public trust protector is
24 putting the interests of a handful of global
25 energy companies over the interests of

1 millions of citizens along the coast. The
2 voices of over thirty thousand citizens have
3 come together petitioning for an industry
4 free ocean. Representatives of every non
5 oil related industry are here today to tell
6 you. You have not listened to their voices.

7 Choose the no action alternative and
8 send the message that no impacts are
9 acceptable impacts in this, the last oil
10 free ocean in the nation.

11 Thank you.

12 MR. BENNETT: Thank you.

13 Captain Joel Fogal.

14 THE AUDIENCE: He stepped out.

15 He'll be back.

16 MR. BENNETT: Okay. I'll call him when
17 he comes back.

18 James Lovgren.

19 MR. LOVGREN: Good afternoon. My name
20 is James Lovgren. I'm a commercial
21 fisherman representing the Fishermen's Dock
22 Co-op of Point Pleasant, and the Garden
23 State Seafood Association. GSSA represents
24 hundreds of fishermen from New Jersey and
25 some neighboring states plus various support

1 industries.

2 Thank you for holding this hearing on
3 an issue that's vitally important to the
4 East Coast fishing industry. Seismic
5 testing is known to have devastating effects
6 on the marine ecosystem and the sea life
7 that my industry depends on for our
8 livelihoods. It has the potential to cause
9 huge financial losses on an industry
10 struggling to meet government imposed stock
11 rebuilding targets. The fishing industry
12 already has to deal with an overzealous
13 MNFS, but at least they notify us when they
14 hold public hearings concerning matters that
15 affect our jobs.

16 In this case, BOEM has not made the
17 slightest effort to contact fishermen, or
18 their organizations, docks, et cetera, of
19 what they are planning. We simply do not
20 exist in your world. I am here to tell you
21 we do, and we have enormous concerns about
22 your proposed action. We will be submitting
23 detailed written comments in the near
24 future, but for now in my generously granted
25 three minutes, I will touch on some of our

1 major concerns.

2 The most outrageous aspect of this
3 seismic testing proposal is its impact on
4 marine mammals. Your environmental impact
5 statement estimates up to 138,612 Level A
6 takes over an eight year period starting in
7 2013. This includes an amazing ten
8 critically endangered northern right
9 whales. Amazing. The National Fishery
10 Service has held the fishing industry to
11 what amounts to a zero tolerance of marine
12 mammal takes in many fisheries and has
13 caused the loss of hundreds of millions of
14 dollars to our fishing industry and its
15 supporting infrastructure in the last
16 decade. Yet in the last two weeks NMFS has
17 announced a two month closure of the gill
18 net fisheries in the Gulf of Maine due to
19 porpoise interactions and a coming massive
20 closure of forty different gill net
21 fisheries due to Atlantic sturgeon
22 interactions, which was recently listed as
23 endangered.

24 Yet your department and the oil
25 industry that runs you can cavalierly nuke

1 every whale, dolphin, and endangered species
2 on the East Coast into oblivion and no one
3 seems to care. We want an answer to this
4 seemingly contradictory action by two
5 different departments of our government.

6 Why can big oil kill anything they want, but
7 the poor little fisherman gets crucified if
8 he looks cross-eyed at a dolphin or whale?

9 The scoreboard shows big oil, 38,637
10 marine mammals a year. Fishing industry,
11 zero. I know some congressmen and senators
12 who are going to be a little bit upset by
13 this seemingly double standard.

14 Level B takes, which are not as
15 serious, but could still result in eventual
16 death as the now deaf, dumb, and blind
17 creatures stumble around disoriented in a
18 shell shocked stupor is an astounding
19 13,586.251 marine mammals over an eight year
20 period. Has NOAA leadership seen these
21 numbers? Because if they have and they do
22 nothing about it, someone should go to jail.

23 Seismic testing around the world has
24 been controversial everywhere it has taken
25 place. Unfortunately, definitive data

1 proving ecological harm is scarce as little
2 research has been done to monitor and
3 document its effects. Presently seismic
4 testing is being done off the Coast of Peru
5 by a U.S. company that has assured the
6 Peruvian Government that seismic testing has
7 no impact on the marine environment.

8 Curiously, within weeks of the start of
9 testing hundreds of dead dolphins started
10 washing up on the beaches and hundreds more
11 were observed at sea. It must have been
12 some renegade fishermen and their walls of
13 death.

14 But enough about mammals. Australian
15 fishermen have watched as their scallop beds
16 have died a few months after seismic testing
17 took place. It seems the testing weakened
18 their immune system and they succumbed to
19 disease. The scallop industry in the Mid
20 Atlantic is the largest and most profitable
21 in the region with an annual dockside value
22 in the hundreds of millions of dollars.
23 Economic multipliers taking into account the
24 cost of the scallop from the sea to the
25 dinner plate is over a billion annually.

1 Seventy percent of the Summer flounder
2 quota is allocated to the states from New
3 Jersey to North Carolina. This ranges from
4 six to twelve million pounds a year, ten to
5 twenty million dollars annually. Loligo and
6 lllexx squid are major fisheries in the Mid
7 Atlantic with annual landings of twenty to
8 fifty million pounds each. Squid have been
9 shown to be affected by high frequency sound
10 waves and suffer disorientation, sensory
11 problems, and susceptibility to predation
12 because of them. These are just a few of
13 the fish species that fishermen will come
14 knocking on your door seeking just
15 compensation for.

16 How about Bluefin tuna, red snapper,
17 striped bass, weakfish, sea bass, surf
18 clams, quahogs, grouper, mackerel, and
19 herring? Research has also shown that fish
20 eggs and larvae are also detrimentally
21 impacted by seismic testing.

22 Someone needs to explain how after
23 twenty years of suffereing from reduced
24 catches due to government imposed
25 regulations to restore our fish stock

1 another government agency can come along and
2 ruin our sacrifices in an instant. I sure
3 hope you indemnify this project with a ton
4 of money because you're going to need it.
5 And I haven't even mentioned the potential
6 impact on the recreational sector. Just
7 double the number and you're in the
8 ballpark.

9 I would be remiss if I didn't question
10 why we even need to do this testing. There
11 is an estimated sixty day supply of oil on
12 the whole of the east Coast, and that is
13 estimated to be able to reduce the price of
14 gas by three cents in twenty years. Goldman
15 Sachs will guarantee we never see a penny of
16 that difference.

17 Lastly, there has to be a better less
18 environmentally destructive way of searching
19 for oil and gas deposits than airgun
20 testing. Think about this. If I were to
21 light off an M80 explosive in this building
22 every ten seconds, you would all run as
23 quickly as you can, possibly with hearing
24 damage, and I would be arrested. Air gun
25 testing is equivalent to that example only

1 many of the sea creatures cannot run away
2 and predictably will die. The few survivors
3 will probably die in a few years from an oil
4 spill. There has to be a better way.

5 Thank you.

6 MR. BENNETT: Thank you.

7 Captain Fogal.

8 CAPTAIN FOGAL: My name is Captain Joel
9 Fogal, United States Merchant Marine
10 Service. I'm here representing Water Watch
11 International for which I'm president and
12 executive director. I'm here also as the
13 Chairman of Environmental Affairs for the
14 Explorers Club International, and the
15 scientists, and their explorers.

16 I represent as Chairman of the
17 Scientific Adventures for Conservation,
18 another organization, and I've put a lot of
19 this information in to Mr. Goeke already,
20 who will have that shortly in a written
21 statement, but I'm really here primarily to
22 just give you another point of view.

23 All the organizations that I have
24 mentioned to you are in support of a
25 turnover of this statement, and the reason

1 for that is as a master diver, a man who
2 worked for Jacque Cousteau many years ago,
3 over forty years ago, Captain Cousteau said
4 to me, we were at sea and he said, Joel,
5 (Indicating French language) your mother is
6 the sea. She's given you everything you
7 have, water, fish. You must treat her with
8 respect. The old man told me that.

9 Now, I had the other opportunity of
10 going under water with Yago Yahos as a
11 diver, what a great man. I don't look that
12 old, do I? I'm seventy years old. Went
13 down to dive in the sea and they were doing
14 early seismic testing, and this is what it
15 sounded like, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom,
16 it would be next to something like that,
17 boom, boom. I thought I was going to lose
18 my eardrums. I had a terrible ice cream
19 headache. I said what the hell is going on
20 here? They were testing the system, boom,
21 boom, boom, boom, that's what it was like.
22 How would you like to be next to that? You
23 wouldn't like that, would you?

24 Well, I didn't like it.

25 Now, you're proposing in light of all

1 this testing the possibility of going up and
2 down the entire East Coast from Florida to
3 this area up here to look for renewable
4 resources.

5 Okay?

6 For gas and oil, not so.

7 Okay?

8 If this had been ten years ago, I would
9 say maybe you don't have a bad point here,
10 but it is not. We have seen Katrina. We've
11 seen the situation with the BP oil spill.
12 We don't have to guess about the outcome of
13 these situations. We know it. Every single
14 one of you has children and grandchildren.
15 We need to think a little bit further ahead
16 than from day to day. And I know that is
17 what's in your hearts. I know that's what
18 you're planning, and I know that's what you
19 would like to do. But don't be suckered by
20 people who don't have these same dreams and
21 those same desires. Don't be pulled into a
22 situation where somebody has a ton of money
23 in their pocket and a lot of interest who
24 has another agenda.

25 These folks in here, they are not

1 making a penny. They're all volunteers. I
2 don't think one of them's on a payroll. I
3 could be wrong. The guy that was standing
4 up here, this one right here --

5 MR. BENNETT: Captain, can you please
6 address your comments to the panel?

7 CAPTAIN FOGAL: I am done.

8 That's all you needed to hear.

9 Please, for your own benefits and for
10 the benefits of the future of this beautiful
11 planet water, sometimes I feel like I'm in
12 heaven.

13 Thank you.

14 MR. BENNETT: Thank you.

15 Joyce Grant.

16 MS. GRANT: Joyce Grant, father of the
17 citizens for oceanfront preservation, and
18 I'm here to speak for thousands of citizens
19 that are against seismic testing.

20 Seismic testing may have killed
21 thousands of dolphins off the coast of
22 Peru. Isn't that enough to stop this
23 senseless exploration for oil and gas in our
24 ocean? BP's deep water horizon drilling rig
25 disaster in the Gulf of Mexico killing

1 eleven workers and creating the nation's
2 worst offshore oil spill that will take
3 decades to recover creating the devastating
4 economic crises of coastal seafood and
5 tourism industries, left deformed or sickly
6 sea life, and more than a million barrels of
7 spilled oil that remain missing, isn't that
8 enough to stop this senseless exploration
9 for oil and gas in our ocean?

10 Is the Bureau of Ocean Energy
11 Management going to continue to imperil and
12 harm our children, our neighbors, future
13 generations, all marine life, other helpless
14 poorer nations, by catering to
15 unquestionable greed of oil companies and
16 corporations when we have the treasured
17 renewable sources of power and technology at
18 hand, wind, water, and sun? Isn't this
19 reckless endangerment to marine life enough
20 to stop this senseless exploration for oil
21 and gas in our oceans?

22 I implore you to stop this madness and
23 choose Alternative C, the take no action
24 alternative.

25 Thank you.

1 MR. BENNETT: Thank you.

2 Sheila Dean.

3 MS. DEAN: Hello, my name is Sheila
4 Dean, and I am the co-director and
5 co-founder of the Marine Mammal Stranding
6 Center. We are the first and only stranding
7 center in the State of New Jersey. We take
8 on the task of rescuing and rehabilitating
9 stranded marine mammals and sea turtles.

10 Over the years we've seen many
11 strandings of whales, dolphins, seals, and
12 sea turtles, and sadly many of them were
13 caused by humans. Our main concern about
14 the seismic testing is the effect it will
15 have on marine life off our coast. If there
16 is a massive evacuation or die off of fish
17 and/or marine mammals caused by this
18 testing, it could have a far reaching impact
19 on the coastal communities of the Eastern
20 seaboard.

21 Marine mammals washing ashore and then
22 dying will have an impact on our economy as
23 it did in 1987 when hundreds of dolphins
24 were coming ashore and most of them were
25 dead. A mass stranding of this size will

1 definitely have a huge impact on my
2 nonprofit organization.

3 There's a lot of scientific data out
4 there on the impacts of the testing. You
5 can find it online. In essence, what I am
6 trying to say is that we are part of the
7 clean up crew for seismic testing and the
8 resulting oil spill. Please don't make us
9 say I told you so.

10 Thank you.

11 MR. BENNETT: Thank you.

12 Michael Egenton.

13 MR. EGENTON: Good afternoon, I'm
14 Michael Egenton.

15 E-G-E-N-T-O-N.

16 Senior Vice President of the New Jersey
17 Chamber of Commerce.

18 We appreciate the opportunity to
19 discuss the draft programmatic environmental
20 impact statement, the PEIS, which will
21 support the issuance of permits to conduct
22 geological and geophysical study activities
23 on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf.

24 By way of background, our organization,
25 the State Chamber, is recognized as the

1 independent voice of business in New Jersey
2 with a broad based membership ranging from
3 Fortune 500 companies to small
4 proprietorships representing every corner of
5 the state and every industry. Our members
6 provide jobs for over a million people in
7 New Jersey. We continue to work towards
8 providing a vibrant business environment and
9 economic prosperity through vision,
10 expertise, and innovative solutions.

11 Growing jobs and the economy remains
12 the key number one issue for our members.
13 Simply stated, no economic recovery can be
14 realized without a successful energy
15 policy. Helping with this vital goal, our
16 colleagues in the oil and natural gas
17 industry support 9.2 million U.S. jobs and a
18 7.7 percent of the U.S. economy and they
19 have vested more than \$2 trillion in U.S.
20 capital projects to advance all forms of
21 energy including alternatives.

22 The oil and natural gas industry should
23 invest in potential exploration of the
24 Atlantic OCS. A diversified supply of these
25 natural resources will ultimately benefit

1 both employers and employees of New Jersey
2 and the United States. Currently, this
3 country imports more than 60 percent of the
4 pretroleum products that have made modern
5 lives so productive, enjoyable, and safe.
6 Our dependency upon foreign supplies
7 subjects us to circumstances beyond our
8 control and threatens our standard of
9 living. If we are to meet our growing
10 demand for energy, we need to keep all
11 options on the table.

12 As such, the PEIS is the first needed
13 step to begin the process of generating the
14 data that will provide for more detailed
15 estimates of the potential for oil and
16 natural gas developing in this area.
17 Generating new data is critical for the
18 Atlantic OCS given that current estimates
19 are based on dated information and have not
20 benefited from the technological advances in
21 seismic surveying and computer modeling in
22 use by the industry today.

23 Keep in mind that seismic companies
24 will be the ones generating this data, not
25 the government, and they generally do this

1 on a speculative basis hoping to sell the
2 data to operators who are looking to
3 purchase leases in an area. With no lease
4 sale scheduled in the Atlantic and, thus, no
5 potential customers, seismic companies have
6 little incentive to gather new data. We
7 encourage completion of this missing element
8 to provide a true incentive to move our
9 comprehensive energy policy and economic
10 future forward.

11 Thank you.

12 MR. BENNETT: Thank you.

13 Michael Drulis.

14 MR. DRULIS: Good afternoon, my name is
15 Michael Drulis. I'm Executive Director of
16 the New Jersey Society for Environmental and
17 Economic Development. I wish to thank you
18 for allowing me to testify here. On behalf
19 of the board and members of the New Jersey
20 SEED, we're here in support of the
21 government's decision to allow seismic
22 studies on the Atlantic Outer Continental
23 Shelf.

24 New Jersey SEED is a unique coalition
25 of New Jersey's most prominent labor and

1 business leaders. Our diverse membership
2 includes labor advocates, business
3 organizations and trade groups, construction
4 and electrical workers' unions, energy
5 providers, environmental consultants,
6 telecommunications firms, banks, residential
7 and commercial development interests, the
8 list goes on and on.

9 What we all have in common is our
10 belief that economic growth and
11 environmental protection are not mutually
12 exclusive. For more than thirty years, New
13 Jersey SEED has supported balanced public
14 policies that bolster our economy and
15 enhance our environment.

16 I come before you today to echo the
17 sentiments of our members and partner
18 organizations alike who believe America's
19 natural gas and oil resources are the
20 linchpin for our economy. Looking to the
21 future, and increase in these limited is
22 required to strengthen America's domestic
23 energy production and independence.

24 Current resource estimates of the
25 Atlantic OCS are hindered by a lack of data.

1 Recent undiscovered technically recoverable
2 resource estimates weigh in at over three
3 billion barrels of oil and 31.3 trillion
4 cubic feet of natural gas. Even these
5 estimates stand to be conservative ones as
6 some areas of the Atlantic OCS are largely
7 unexplored and have not benefited from the
8 use of new seismic and computer modeling
9 technologies.

10 At the core of New Jersey SEED's
11 mission is the genuine devotion to
12 environmentally friendly economic
13 development. Marine seismic exploration is
14 carefully regulated by the Federal
15 Government and managed by the operator who
16 is committed to the monitoring of marine
17 mammals, the surrounding levels, and the
18 marine life's proximity to noted exclusion
19 zones. New Jersey SEED commends
20 government's efforts to work closely with
21 all industry to ensure that issues of
22 environmental or ecological harm do not
23 occur. Our coalition firmly believes we can
24 safely develop our energy portfolio while
25 still protecting our environment.

1 The benefits of such production trickle
2 down far beyond energy security. Currently,
3 the oil and natural gas industry supports
4 9.2 million jobs and delivers more than \$86
5 million per day in revenue to our
6 government. Studies have shown that
7 developing oil and natural gas reserves in
8 offshore waters and other Federally
9 controlled areas could create hundreds of
10 thousands of jobs and generate hundreds of
11 billions of dollars in revenue for
12 government programs.

13 In order to insure sound investment
14 decisions, we need to begin the research now
15 and we fully support the government's
16 decision to conduct a seismic analysis.
17 With the current data over twenty years old,
18 a new seismic survey would undoubtedly give
19 producers a clearer picture and detailed
20 accounting of potential resources. Not only
21 would future natural gas and oil production
22 lead to a steady and reliable source of
23 energy, it would also help keep overall
24 input costs stable. In a time of rising
25 expenditures and stagnant revenues their

1 benefit to our economy is one we simply
2 cannot afford to ignore.

3 I ask that you consider these points
4 presented today and urge you to see the
5 vital role increased production of our oil
6 and natural gas resources play in
7 strengthening our economy.

8 Thank you for your time.

9 MR. BENNETT: Thank you.

10 Scott Ross.

11 MR. ROSS: Good afternoon, my name is
12 Scott Ross, and I'm the Associate Director
13 for the New Jersey Petroleum Council.

14 Thank you for the opportunity to speak
15 to you today about this PEIS, which will
16 support the issuance of permits to conduct
17 geological and geophysical study activities
18 on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf.

19 The oil and natural gas industry has a
20 long history of working with the Department
21 of Interior to develop this country's
22 natural resources to the benefit of the
23 United States economy and all Americans.
24 Our industry stands ready to invest in
25 exploration off the Atlantic OCS, and this

1 PEIS is a needed first step to begin the
2 process of generating the data that will
3 allow for more robust estimates of the
4 potential for oil and natural gas
5 development in this area. Generating new
6 data is very important for the Atlantic OCS
7 given that current estimates are based on
8 decades old data and have not benefited from
9 the technological advances in seismic
10 surveying computer modeling in use by the
11 industry today.

12 Although it is difficult to accurately
13 estimate the amount of resources without the
14 benefit of drilling, current estimates are
15 likely to be conservative given that history
16 has shown that active exploration and
17 development often leads to increased
18 resource estimates.

19 However, the belief that moving forward
20 with this decision can quickly lead to
21 filling the information gaps on potential
22 Atlantic OCS oil and gas resources is
23 misguided. This gesture falls short in
24 initiating a forward thinking comprehensive
25 energy policy. In fact, the data collection

1 activities envisioned by the administration
2 will not likely happen unless companies are
3 convinced the prospects for leasing in the
4 Atlantic OCS in the near future are real.

5 As we all know, current OCS policy does
6 not allow for a lease sale in the Atlantic
7 until 2017 at the earliest.

8 It is important to remember that the
9 government does not generate this data,
10 seismic companies do, and they generally do
11 this on a speculative basis hoping to sell
12 the data to operators who are looking to
13 purchase leases in an area. With no lease
14 sale scheduled in the Atlantic, and thus no
15 potential customers, seismic companies have
16 little incentive to gather new data.

17 Not including the North Atlantic
18 planning area in this PEIS is yet another
19 short sighted policy decision. There is a
20 great deal of interest in surveying and
21 eventually developing this area. Oil and
22 natural gas companies need geological and
23 geophysical data that they can use to
24 compare with geological features in other
25 offshore areas where there is current oil

1 and natural gas production. Without this
2 new data, a significant data gap will
3 remain.

4 We can create more jobs and generate
5 more revenue if allowed to responsibly
6 develop and produce here in the United
7 States more of the oil and natural gas we
8 need. But more development, especially on
9 public lands and Federally controlled
10 waters, requires that industry and
11 government share a vision of the potential
12 benefits and act as partners to fully
13 realize them. The oil and natural gas
14 industry already supports 9.2 million U.S.
15 jobs and 7.7 percent of the U.S. economy,
16 delivers more than \$86 million a day in
17 revenue to our government, and since 2000
18 has invested more than \$2 trillion in U.S.
19 capital projects to advance all forms of
20 energy including alternatives.

21 A Wood Mackenzie study shows that
22 developing offshore areas that had been
23 subject to congressional moratoria until
24 recently as well as the resources in
25 Alaska's National Wildlife Refuge and a

1 small portion of currently unavailable
2 Federal lands in the Rockies would lift U.S.
3 crude oil production by as much as 2.8
4 million barrels per day in 2025, equivalent
5 to 30 percent of the nation's current
6 imports, increase natural gas production by
7 6.5 billion cubic feet per day in 2025,
8 create 530,000 new jobs, and add \$206
9 billion in cumulative government revenue by
10 2025, \$196 billion from the OCS alone.

11 These are not limited to jobs directly
12 associated with oil and natural gas
13 development, but jobs created indirectly by
14 those companies that supply equipment and
15 other support services both offshore and
16 onshore as well as construct the
17 infrastructure required to drill offshore.

18 In addition, offshore development can
19 generate much needed revenue to fund
20 critical services, including roads,
21 environmental conservation, and education.

22 We appreciate the opportunity to
23 comment on this PEIS for geological and
24 geophysical studies in the Atlantic OCS and
25 the oil and natural gas industry stands

1 ready to invest in safe exploration and
2 development of the OCS should administration
3 policies change to take full advantage of
4 the opportunities that are present.

5 Thank you.

6 MR. BENNETT: I want to thank everyone
7 for staying pretty close to our time
8 constraints, and I don't think I mentioned
9 it before, but we will have an opportunity
10 after all the registered speakers are
11 finished to hear from anyone else that wants
12 to give a comment to do so at that time.

13 But we're only about halfway through
14 right now, and we'd like to give everyone
15 about a five minute break at this time.

16 (Whereupon, a short recess was taken.)

17 MR. BENNETT: I want to thank you for
18 adhering to our time constraints.

19 The next speaker is Tom Fagen.

20 MR. FAGEN: Good afternoon, my name is
21 Tom Fagen. I came here today wearing a
22 couple of different hats. Primarily, I just
23 want to talk as a diver, someone who's knows
24 the ocean. I'm also a union member and
25 officer. I know you heard one of these guys

1 saying the union was behind this thing. I
2 know my union is not, and I'm from one of
3 the largest unions in the State, CWA, which
4 supports COA, the Clean Ocean Act.

5 I don't know where you're all from, but
6 25 years ago along the coast right here we
7 had fish kills, we had medical waste washing
8 up on the beach, we had raw sewage being
9 dumped, we had chemical waste being dumped
10 off our shores at different sites, we had
11 plenty of fish kills, we had pipelines
12 pumping millions of gallons of carcinogenic
13 waste every day, and we started working to
14 stop this and turn it around, and that was
15 25 years ago when people thought the ocean
16 was dying and it pretty much was.

17 We've worked too hard to now allow this
18 kind of a risk to return to our ocean and
19 ruin everything that we've accomplished.
20 There are people who use the ocean, enjoy
21 the ocean, there are people who rely on it
22 for their livelihood like the commercial
23 fishermen, not to mention the citizens of
24 the ocean, the fish, the mammals, marine
25 mammals.

1 As a diver, I use the ocean. I enjoy
2 it. Some divers make their livelihood from
3 the ocean. Some of us maybe hold dual
4 citizenship on land and in the ocean if you
5 spend enough time here. Quite a few years
6 ago I ruptured both of my eardrums diving.
7 I had to stay out of the water for six weeks
8 and take antibiotics. You know, when they
9 rupture the ears of marine mammals, they
10 don't have that option to get out of the
11 water for six weeks and probably no access
12 to antibiotics.

13 As a diver, my ears are very
14 sensitive. When I go down a hundred feet,
15 my ears bother me. It takes me probably
16 twenty times to dive a hundred feet. I know
17 what that feels like under water. Under
18 water sound travels so fast you can't tell
19 where it's coming from. A boat could go
20 over your head and you can hear it, but you
21 can't tell where it's coming from. Some
22 other diver can be banging on the side of
23 the boat, and you can hear the sound, but
24 you can't tell what direction it's coming
25 from.

1 So, when you have marine mammals and
2 fish that rely on their hearing in the salt
3 water to navigate to find their supplies of
4 food, to find their pods, to find their way
5 back to wherever they spawn and reproduce a
6 new generation, the fish, you know, this is
7 all connected. And to just go up and down
8 the east coast with this acoustic pollution,
9 which is what it is, it disorients all of
10 these mammals. We don't even know what
11 those results could be. It could be
12 devastating to the fishing stocks, to the
13 marine mammals.

14 You see what is going on in Peru. In
15 the last five years, I've seen more dolphin
16 and whales right out here off our coast than
17 I did in the previous twenty combined. Our
18 ocean is rebounding. It's coming back from
19 where it was 25 years ago, it is, because of
20 the regulations, because of the removal of
21 the threats to close the chemical dump
22 sites, to close the chemical pipelines, the
23 sewerage treatment plants. We've done all
24 these things, and now we can turn back the
25 clock by allowing this to proceed.

1 We don't need this. This is not going
2 to make gas a dollar a gallon.

3 Thank you.

4 MR. BENNETT: Thank you.

5 Gregory Model.

6 MR. MODEL: I'll pass.

7 MR. BENNETT: Theresa Stifel.

8 MS. STIFEL: Thank you very much for
9 this opportunity to speak. I am just sorry
10 that I have to be here to do it because I do
11 feel very strongly that this proposal should
12 not have gone forward and shouldn't be at
13 this point.

14 I sincerely oppose the proposed plan.
15 It is fundamentally flawed and it is
16 naturally frustrating to the economic and
17 ecologic well being of New Jersey and the
18 whole eastern coast if it goes forward. The
19 fishing industry will be undermined by this
20 because we all know that fish die, that fish
21 are killed from this, and as a previous
22 speaker mentioned, I'll go further, there
23 are many exemplary studies that show that
24 marine mammals are injured and damaged by
25 this. But they are also even more

1 importantly thrown off course from their
2 entire area, their ability to communicate
3 with each other, they're lost.

4 Think about being lost in this building
5 and you can't holler to someone and it's all
6 smokey and the lights are out and so forth.
7 How do you reach out to somebody to get
8 out? You've got to hear. You've got to
9 find some way out, but you can't. You can't
10 because, for example, if you are doing
11 seismic surveys out there and you have 200
12 decibels of noise, that is profoundly
13 damaging.

14 I am a retired industrial hygienist.
15 I'm a certified industrial hygienist, and I
16 did noise surveys. I know what it feels
17 like to be in a room with a hundred and ten
18 decibel noise impacting you. It hits you in
19 the gut. To think that we have 200 decibels
20 being released and having that continue, not
21 continuous noise, there's a difference, it
22 is impact, impact, impact. And to have that
23 going on for a period, yes, it drops off to
24 180 decibels maybe in half a mile, or maybe
25 a quarter of a mile, and maybe it drops to

1 150.

2 Do you realize the difference? If I go
3 from a hundred to 110 decibels, I've gone up
4 tenfold. Think about what it takes to go to
5 160.

6 So, we're not just talking about, gee,
7 it's nice, gee, it can't reach where he's
8 going. We're talking about true physical
9 injury to animals. Think about it in terms
10 of spills. And, yes, I'm opposed, totally
11 opposed, to this plan because it's a gateway
12 to drill and it's looking in the rear view
13 mirror that Vice President Biden refused the
14 Romney administration or potential
15 administration of doing. In his
16 perspective, it's tied to the oil and gas
17 industry. It's a bloated industry, and it's
18 an industry that's tied to fossil fuel.
19 That fossil fuel when it is consumed causes
20 terrific health impact and it is also
21 releases global warming gases, green house
22 gases.

23 And, yes, Co2, may be half of what coal
24 is, but we know, in fact, that it is quite a
25 problem, and we certainly know about

1 methane. I'm not going into too much
2 detail. I know very much what they are. I
3 am talking to you because you represent an
4 administration that knows even better than
5 we do what the damage from methane spills
6 really has been and what it continues to be.

7 And don't you try to placate us. We
8 realize that you are devastating the world.
9 No industry is coming in and spending the
10 money to do a survey out there, which would
11 be very expensive to do, if they do not plan
12 to recuperate that money, and they're
13 planning to do it by extracting this fossil
14 fuel.

15 This type of survey is not essential to
16 have renewables off our coast. We want
17 wind, not whales, off our coast and along
18 the Atlantic Coast. We want this
19 administration to fulfill its obligations.
20 It's the 21st Century. Think in a new
21 direction. You are empowered to look at
22 renewables as well as conventional energy
23 sources. Don't fall into the trap of we
24 know what we do, we know how we can do it,
25 and, gee, we have better technology now to

1 get those conventional resources.

2 That's wrong. Go for the future. We
3 do not want this survey. You will force us
4 back because it is a gateway. And not even
5 that, because you will injure marine life
6 that's out there right now and, therefore,
7 our economy, and the fishing industry, and
8 our tourism industry. There are boats that
9 go out and look for these marine mammals to
10 see them. You will damage that merely by
11 going out and looking with these types of
12 surveys that you're going to do.

13 So, I ask you to please discontinue
14 this plan and don't go any further.

15 Thank you.

16 MR. BENNETT: Thank you.

17 Jim Walsh.

18 Rachel Dawn Davis.

19 MS. DAVIS: Hello, I'm Rachael Dawn
20 Davis. I'm an organizer on the Food and
21 Water Watch, which is a national consumer
22 advocate organization. We have offices
23 throughout the country, including New
24 Jersey.

25 Food and Water Watch works to insure

1 the food, water, and fish we consume is
2 safe, accessible, and sustainable so we can
3 all enjoy and trust in what we eat and
4 drink. We help people take charge of where
5 their food comes from, keep clean,
6 affordable, public tap water flowing freely
7 to our homes, protect the environment
8 quality of oceans, force government to do
9 its job protecting citizens, and educate
10 about the importance of keeping shared
11 resources under public control.

12 I am here today to tell you to reject
13 this proposal to industrialize our oceans at
14 taxpayer expense.

15 The rush to drill on land and in our
16 oceans is threatening our shared resources
17 in ways that are beyond repair. The ocean
18 belongs to all of us, and large oil and gas
19 rigs will jeopardize the health and safety
20 of our beaches, fisheries, and coastal
21 communities. Our energy future is at a
22 crossroads and the path we choose for our
23 energy future today will impact us for
24 generations to come. I don't think I need
25 to say do we need to be reminded of the BP

1 disaster? I think we do. That is the road
2 we will be going down if we allow seismic
3 testing off our shore.

4 The disaster in the Gulf of Mexico has
5 shown us a worse case scenario for the
6 damage that industrialization of the ocean
7 can have on coastal communities, commercial
8 and recreational fishermen, and our
9 environment. Although the well has been
10 capped, we are only beginning to understand
11 the damage that occurred from this massive
12 oil spill.

13 The worst part of this proposal might
14 be the fact that the Federal Government is
15 subsidizing big oil by using tax dollars to
16 locate oil. We have been asking the Federal
17 Government to increase funding for ocean
18 research and the studies of fisheries, but
19 they never just could seem to find the
20 money. They are even trying to close the
21 NOAA facility in Sandy Hook because money is
22 so tight. Now, they can find the money to
23 throw out a red carpet for big oil.

24 What happens if we find shale under the
25 ocean floor? I bet people in Atlantic City

1 would place bets on whether or not we would
2 approve ocean fracking before a pilot wind
3 farm is established.

4 Put the health and well being of our
5 coastal communities, fisheries, and oceans
6 above the profits of oil giants and reject
7 this proposal.

8 MR. BENNETT: Robert Benecamper.

9 MR. BENE CAMPER: Yes. My name is
10 Robert Benecamper. I'm a resident of Brick
11 Township, New Jersey, and I volunteer with
12 Clean Ocean Action, and, actually, over the
13 past several years I have had the privilege
14 to speak to several thousands of citizens on
15 this subject, and I can tell you with
16 authority that 90 percent of those people
17 agree with everyone here who spoke against
18 it. The other ten percent, five percent are
19 undecided and the final five work for the
20 oil companies.

21 I'd like to read you a paragraph from
22 the latest Smithsonian Magazine under the
23 heading of ten things we've learned about
24 the earth since last Earth Day. Item 6 is
25 the oceans are in bigger trouble than we

1 thought. The annual state of ocean report
2 published in July by an international team
3 of experts concluded that things were far
4 worse in the ocean ecosystem than previously
5 feared. The range of stresses including
6 rising sea temperatures, over fishing, and
7 certification of pollution have combined to
8 threaten extinction for many aquatic species
9 including those that create coral reef. We
10 have under estimated the overall risks to
11 report noted in the whole of marine
12 segregation is greater than some of its
13 parts.

14 Things we have learned. I am not sure
15 we have learned. Simply put, we cannot
16 continue to do things to harm the marine
17 environment. Seismic testing and offshore
18 drilling are too harmful to be allowed. The
19 oil companies have the opportunity to become
20 energy companies. Forward thinking energy
21 looks to the future through research on
22 other forms of energy and creates jobs for
23 the people in the oil industry now for the
24 future.

25 Thank you.

1 MR. BENNETT: Thank you.

2 Jean Marie Donahue.

3 MS. DONAHUE: Hello, my name's Jean
4 Marie Donahue. I am a senior manager at
5 Water Spirit. Water Spirit is an ecology
6 and spirituality program based in Elberon,
7 New Jersey. We are sponsored by the Sisters
8 of Saint Joseph of Peace, but we are
9 inclusive of people of all faith. We
10 advocate and educate on water issues.

11 Beginning the process for future oil
12 drilling with seismic surveys is a short
13 sighted plan for harvesting energy for the
14 future. When we think of power known to
15 generate energy, we have to also take into
16 account are we keeping the balance of
17 creation. We believe that all creation is
18 sacred, and we have a responsibility as
19 human beings to protect the balance through
20 which creation works. For people of faith,
21 and there are many people of faith, that is
22 a sacred trust.

23 There's enough evidence that seismic
24 surveys lead to oil and gas drilling and
25 they disrupt this balance. Oil drilling has

1 been proven again and again damaging to
2 water, to ecosystems, to human life, and to
3 nature. The oil industry has a proven track
4 record of spills, and leaks, and destruction
5 to the environment. This isn't just in the
6 United States, unfortunately. It's all over
7 the world as recently seen in Nigeria and
8 Brazil.

9 Besides the destructive environmental
10 history, our consumption of fossil fuels is
11 directly contributing to climate change, the
12 desertification of Earth, creating
13 environmental refugees, consributing to
14 severe weather, and causing human
15 illnesses.

16 Combined, all of these clean up
17 recoveries and assistance to people in need
18 costs us billions and billions of dollars,
19 and we now know it doesn't have to be this
20 way. We now know it does not have to be
21 this out of balance for creation.

22 Grant it, oil and gas are our current
23 sources of energy. We collectively as a
24 people and people of faith should be
25 planning on moving towards having oil and

1 gas become our energy sources of the past.
2 Our future is in the primary sources of
3 energy that can live in harmony and balance
4 with water, ecosystems, nature, and earth,
5 and these sources include solar, geothermal,
6 wind, and tidal energy.

7 We are here to say enough is enough.
8 We are smarter than this, we are better than
9 this, and our care, creation, and protection
10 of water is a primary responsibility for us
11 as human beings. This is reckless for us to
12 be planning to drill for oil and gas in
13 extreme new places that were previously off
14 limit. Just look at the destruction that
15 has happened in the Gulf as one of the
16 examples of why we should not be planning
17 our future on oil. We invite everyone to
18 look at the study done by Marc Jacobson at
19 Stanford University, and Mark Delucchi of
20 the University of California, Davis, that
21 shows definitively the world can transition
22 globally to clean, renewable energy with
23 today's technology, that is, today's
24 technology, in the next 20-to-40 years.

25 We have recently read article after

1 article and study after study that show the
2 transition to clean, safe energy will be
3 good for the economy, provide sustainable
4 job growth overall, and provide our country
5 with secure, reliable energy sources and
6 energy independence, while at the same time
7 creating a more sustainable balance with
8 creation.

9 We are morally and ethically outraged
10 by the fossil fuel corporations' continual
11 dominance in running our energy public
12 policy and attempting to force yet another
13 wave of oil and gas drilling in the ocean.
14 This is reckless and it's damaging to
15 creation. The seismic surveys should not be
16 allowed to go forward. Let's plan for a
17 balance of creation. Let's plan for a
18 future in clean, renewable, safe energy that
19 can be harvested in harmony with our
20 environment and with creation.

21 So, obviously, we're for Alternative C.

22 Thank you.

23 MR. BENNETT: Thank you.

24 Tom Neugebauer.

25 MR. NEUGEBAUER: Thank you.

1 My name is Tom Neugebauer, and I'm not
2 going to be one of the most popular people
3 in the room today. I'm here today with
4 TGS-NOPEC Geophysical Company, and I'm here
5 today representing the International
6 Association of Geophysical Contractors,
7 IACG.

8 The IACG is the international trade
9 association representing the industry that
10 provides geophysical services to the energy
11 industry, including both the conventional
12 and renewable sectors.

13 There's been a lot of points made on
14 behalf of the points the IGC believes in,
15 and I have about five minutes here, but I
16 want to keep them short. I'll hand the
17 stenographer my written comments, and the
18 IGC is sending over some more written
19 comments.

20 One of the things I wanted to talk
21 about was the need for geophysical data and
22 the reasons for geophysical data. As you
23 know, geophysical surveys are one of the
24 very first tools used in the exploration
25 process and when applied early in the

1 exploration process will aid exploration and
2 production companies in focusing their
3 analysis and illuminate the most prospective
4 areas for future oil and natural gas
5 exploration.

6 That data is just not good enough. I
7 think everyone would agree and understand
8 that technology is good and, in essence, to
9 understand what is the resource potential we
10 have. I think that's a very valuable
11 question that we need to answer, and the
12 only way to properly answer that question is
13 with geophysical seismic data. The research
14 potential is a responsibility that we have
15 to the nation, to our people, and to our
16 children to fully understand.

17 But taking the next step to extract
18 that resource, that is a whole different
19 question, one that the citizens for each
20 state need to again discuss with government
21 with their representatives. From our
22 standpoint, we are in support of new data
23 and we are in favor of seismic surveys. We
24 are not in support of the forty kilometers
25 source separation that is proposed in

1 Alternative B.

2 Notwithstanding, we have had recent
3 geological and geophysical permits provided
4 in the Gulf of Mexico for both the western
5 and central planning areas that contain this
6 mitigation measure that were not based on
7 any (inaudible).

8 The areas of offshore Nova Scotia that
9 have existing seismic data is also critical
10 in understanding the basis.

11 One other thing is when we talk about
12 seismic surveys, these surveys are a short
13 duration. The source enters a signal that's
14 a short duration and a very low frequency
15 signal. There are studies that have been
16 undertaken on this point, and there is no
17 scientific evidence to show that there is
18 any population that is reduced to an
19 endangered species.

20 We have over fifty years of experience
21 in the Gulf of Mexico OCS as well as forty
22 years of experience in the Artic OCS. IGC
23 conducts our operations in a highly
24 environmentally friendly manner.

25 We have talked about the use of MMO's,

1 and we use those techniques currently in the
2 Gulf of Mexico and in the Arctic to minimize
3 the risk to marine mammals.

4 The other thing I'd like to say to the
5 audience today, I do have examples of
6 seismic information that shows the advances
7 that we've processed over the last ten years
8 in the Gulf of Mexico. I also have some
9 examples of data that resulted from offshore
10 New Jersey and offshore North Carolina for
11 people to evaluate, and look, and see the
12 information that is currently at hand and
13 currently available to both government and
14 industry for this evaluation.

15 I also have, if people are interested,
16 the mitigation operations that we have
17 employed to protect the environment. I can
18 also talk about the modern geophysical
19 operations. I also have sound energy in the
20 ocean.

21 I thank you today for the opportunity
22 to speak and thank you for listening.

23 MR. BENNETT: Thank you.

24 Simone Healy.

25 MS. HEALY: Hi, I'm Simone Healy. I am

1 not here on any official basis as a
2 representative of any group.

3 I'm, quite frankly, here because I'm
4 curiously disgusted at even the possibility
5 of this happening. I think the relationship
6 between big oil and our government has
7 become so glaringly, grotesquely close that
8 the people are going to have to organize and
9 officially say no way, no way is this
10 happening off our coast. We're not allowing
11 it period.

12 Seismic testing is sonic warfare
13 against the ocean, all of the life that
14 lives in it, and all the people who live on
15 the coast who care about that life.

16 There is nothing else you can say about
17 it. In Peru, there were thousands of
18 dolphin last week washing up on shore with
19 blood pouring out of their ears from sonic
20 testing. Why do you need to do this testing
21 if not to drill?

22 Good news, we can all go home because
23 we are not allowing drilling off our coast
24 in New Jersey. All up along the Atlantic
25 Seaboard is the last place, the last

1 coastline where there's no drilling for oil
2 allowed. We have stood our ground so far,
3 and we are going to continue to do so.

4 There's no point. We are not going to
5 have it.

6 Thank you.

7 That's all.

8 MR. BENNETT: Tom Morgan.

9 MR. MORGAN: I'm Tom Morgan
10 representing Sea Surfers Environmental
11 Alliances International Group. We're
12 dedicated to preserving the ocean
13 environment, the sea environment, and beach
14 access. We spearhead for certain reserve,
15 international certain reserve in California,
16 Santa Barbara, and we're seeking to reserve
17 one in Australia.

18 I heard some talk earlier and I noticed
19 there was some reference to moderate damage
20 to the marine environment. This is a very
21 graphic picture of the dead dolphin that
22 washed up on the beach in Peru. It's
23 unacceptable. If you are not an
24 environmentalist, you may be from an
25 economic standpoint, or from a voter right

1 standpoint, this may have some gravity.

2 When you look at these dead dolphin,
3 it's clear that blood is pouring out of
4 their ears. It's clear that they're dead,
5 and it's clear that there are multiple
6 fatalities.

7 Looking at that picture, what I have
8 here for your review, if you would like, you
9 have to think of the impact being done to
10 the environment. I, myself, find it
11 egregious as a father and as just a person
12 that lives here in Atlantic City. I live
13 right up the street, 37 Light House Court,
14 born and raised down here, former City
15 Solicitor here in Atlantic City, and former
16 democratic chair.

17 And, you know, this isn't about
18 politics. This is not a partisanship. It's
19 not a democratic or a republican issue.
20 It's a human issue and how it impacts our
21 environment. If something were to occur,
22 say, if somebody walked in here right now
23 with a football uniform on and sat down, you
24 would think that was very odd, wouldn't
25 you? I would. I think it's odd that people

1 would conduct this seismic drilling if they
2 were seismic drilling, seismic testing, if
3 they weren't going to drill for oil. That's
4 a non start. We already have a moritorium
5 in place. People have voted on this.

6 And I can assure the BOEM if this does,
7 if this is even under remote consideration,
8 that there's going to be a public outcry. I
9 find it odd that some of the gentlemen here
10 earlier that spoke, and then they left, you
11 know, in suits, they came here representing
12 special interests. They came here
13 representing the right to do this.

14 We are here as citizens. My
15 organization, we have thousands of members
16 across the country, and it was odd that this
17 was in the middle of our workday. Not many
18 people could show, but the people that did
19 show here volunteered. Everybody that sat
20 up on the executive board could see,
21 everybody on that executive board is
22 volunteers.

23 Okay?

24 And I find that you get more mileage
25 out of volunteers because they're people

1 that have a passion behind their rights,
2 their civil rights, to speak out against
3 this. And, oddly enough, we were kind of
4 questioned earlier when we were down in a
5 public place what we were doing, and there's
6 certain constitutional rights that are
7 involved with this. And I notice that we
8 have a court reporter here. And I remember
9 in my twenty years of trial practice that
10 when you're in court, you are engaged to the
11 Judge, but you marry the record. And for
12 public record's sake, there is at least a
13 ten to one ratio here of people speaking out
14 against this, which is a pretty telling
15 number.

16 And those people are not here because
17 they are being paid. Those people are here
18 because we are concerned.

19 We are concerned to have our marine
20 mammals decimated and dying. This isn't
21 about moderate, and there's no options.
22 There's no Option A, Option B, Option C.
23 There's no options. It's C. There is
24 nothing that should start because if it
25 starts, there's going to be such a public

1 outcry and people are going to represent
2 that outcry in their votes and the way that
3 they speak to other people about who they're
4 going to vote for because this is a non
5 starter.

6 Regardless of how much money the oil
7 industry wants to invest in this, I can
8 assure you that there will be accountability
9 to the politicians, to BOEM, to the
10 Department of the Interior. And that's not
11 a threat. That's just a fact.

12 Okay?

13 I was paddling out through the inlet
14 this morning and the sun's coming up, it was
15 a beautiful day. I took the day off to be
16 here because I'm an educator here in
17 Atlantic City. After twenty years of
18 practicing law, I had enough of that. But
19 I'm paddling out in the inlet and there was
20 a pod of dolphin feeding on feeder fish, and
21 the pod was about maybe twelve to fifteen
22 dolphin. And I'm paddling out, the sun's
23 coming up, it was awesome. It was a great
24 experience, something that everybody should
25 have a right to enjoy. The dolphin swam

1 along the paddleboard for a while, and then
2 went their own separate ways.

3 But if you're not an environmentalist
4 and that doesn't float your boat, I also
5 have a few businesses in town here as well,
6 and from an economic standpoint, I don't
7 know where that guy was from that was here
8 speaking about the New Jersey Chamber of
9 Commerce. I mean, I belong to the Atlantic
10 County Chamber of Commerce, the Atlantic
11 City Chamber of Commerce, and I have never
12 heard of those guys before.

13 Okay?

14 And the problem with today's hearing is
15 it's in the middle of a workday and a lot of
16 people can't be here because they can't take
17 off a day to be here. I chose to do that,
18 the other people here chose to do that, to
19 miss their work. But the economic impact
20 that this would have to the Jersey Shore, I
21 live 800 yards from the Revel Hotel Casino
22 down here in the inlet. They have a \$3
23 billion investment on that beach and they
24 get their entire business plan revolves
25 around the beach, the ocean, the sea, and

1 embracing that life style. It's an economic
2 commodity here at the shore that employs
3 tens of thousands of people. It feeds their
4 families along with the fishing industry.

5 If this happens, it kills fish. It
6 kills marine mammals. Dolphin are going to
7 wash up on the shore here and fish will wash
8 up on the shore in the thousands. What's
9 that going to do for our tourism industry?

10 Again, if you are not an
11 environmentalist, if you are an economist,
12 look at that, what it's going to do to this
13 economic environment. Senator Menedez spoke
14 about it through his proxy earlier. It
15 can't happen. It won't happen. If it does
16 happen, if you lose that exploratory phase
17 through the seismic harm that it's doing to
18 these dolphin, then we can talk about how it
19 impacts them. It kills them. Regardless of
20 how it kills them, it kills them. Because
21 what it does is it scrambles their brain and
22 it comes, you know, so much vibration in the
23 water, it kills fish and it kills everything
24 in its path.

25 And I don't know if anybody here, and

1 I'm sure the board members here, you've been
2 out and played in the ocean, you know, and
3 you've been under water for a minute and you
4 can hear this motor boat and you put your
5 head up, you know, is this thing coming
6 right at me, and it is about a mile offshore
7 and you can see it as it passes you. It's
8 unbelievable how sound travels in salt
9 water.

10 So, this is not just a matter of this
11 doesn't impact New Jersey, New Jersey's on
12 the borderline. This will kill marine
13 mammals. It will kill everything that's
14 within at least a hundred, two hundred miles
15 of it.

16 So, that seismic exploration, as much
17 as we want to sugar coat that, it's going to
18 kill mammals, it's going to hurt our economy
19 here at the Jersey Shore. I mean, for
20 selfish reasons, I have a family I have to
21 support and our businesses revolve around
22 it. We have a surf school down here. In my
23 mid life crises, you know, I opened a surf
24 school. And we love what we do. We have an
25 environmental component in our school, and

1 just from that standpoint alone, the thought
2 of killing anything in the ocean, you know,
3 marine mammals especially that it's just
4 unacceptable and it would decimate our
5 economy here.

6 Atlantic City, turn off the lights.
7 Because I'll tell you right now, if for a
8 minute, I mean, this convention center, you
9 want conventions to come here, they want to
10 come here to tens of thousands of gallons of
11 barrels of oil washing up on the Jersey
12 Shore, or thousands of dolphin and marine
13 mammals washing up on the coast, people
14 aren't going to want a part of that. So,
15 you might as well just turn out the
16 lights in Atlantic City. Turn out the
17 lights at the Jersey Shore.

18 But it's not just our community. It's
19 every community along the eastern seaboard.
20 This is the last existing non oil drilled
21 decimated ocean environment here on the east
22 coast. And I think that John F. Kennedy
23 said it properly years ago. He said we are
24 all part of the sea. We're all part of the
25 sea, and he noted this. He said the same

1 amount or the percentage of salt in our
2 bodies and in our tears is the same that's
3 in the ocean. And he also noted that where
4 society and the world kind of became corrupt
5 or dirty, the sea cleanses. It's like every
6 time you dive in the ocean, you know, you
7 feel that, you know, that that taint washed
8 off of you, and that says a lot.

9 And JFK said years ago, I think it was
10 like 1963 in a private interview, but I
11 think it's very salient conditions today, in
12 that sea and surf that we have here with our
13 ocean environment, if we don't protect that,
14 if we don't embrace it, if we don't cherish
15 that, we're done. As a civilization, we are
16 done.

17 Thank you very much for the opportunity
18 to speak today.

19 MR. BENNETT: Thank you.

20 Egan Stanish.

21 MS. STANISH: Egan Stanish.

22 Good afternoon. I am an education
23 coordinator for the Clean Ocean Action, and
24 every day I teach and learn about the
25 importance of a clean ocean.

1 Thank you very much for the opportunity
2 to be here today. The future of our ocean
3 starts here, and with this proposal our
4 ocean, our ports, and our clean coastal
5 economy are depending on you to choose
6 Alternative C.

7 First, let me echo the statements of
8 those made before me. These surveys will
9 only benefit oil companies and only oil
10 drilling that will come to the Atlantic.
11 Both of these end results are unacceptable.

12 Second, there are many impacts to our
13 marine ecosystem from these surveys that
14 have not been raised in immediate focus on
15 offshore drilling. There are only 400 North
16 Atlantic right whales left. Any impact to
17 this critically endangered population is
18 unacceptable. Impact of these surveys on
19 scuba divers has not been assessed as they
20 should be, and it is a significant cause for
21 concern.

22 The cumulative impact of these surveys
23 has not yet been adequately assessed. This
24 is the most densely populated stretch of
25 coastline and the coastal ecosystem is under

1 a great amount of threat from (inaudible)
2 and from other conditions that affect
3 habitat loss and climate change. Adding
4 killer air gun blasts in the mix is a recipe
5 for disaster.

6 Third, this program says it's for
7 renewable energy exploration as well as oil
8 and gas. Blasting seismic sound waves miles
9 into the sea floor is not needed for
10 renewables, just for oil. Anything
11 otherwise is a lie.

12 Fourth, our system in environmental law
13 is supposed to protect our whales,
14 fisheries, and coastal resources, not make
15 them subordinate to the interests of big
16 oil.

17 Finally, let me be clear. Drilling for
18 oil in the Atlantic will not lead to cheaper
19 gas this Summer. It puts our entire economy
20 and our entire coastline at risk. The
21 energy companies want you to think that this
22 is new technology. It isn't. They have
23 better computers to plan drilling
24 operations, but the impact is the same,
25 under water exploration. There's nothing

1 new there.

2 So, leave the Atlantic alone. We want
3 a clean ocean zone.

4 MR. BENNETT: Thank you.

5 Regina Shadley.

6 MS. SHADLEY: Good afternoon, my name
7 is Regina Shadley. I'm from Ocean City, and
8 I'm cofounder of a South Jersey Group called
9 Cure, Clean, and Repair.

10 And one of our first, we, actually,
11 formed as a result of the oil spill in the
12 Gulf, and one of our first battles with many
13 other groups from Linden, New Jersey, down
14 to South Jersey was to try and stop the
15 carbon sea frustration off the coast of
16 Atlantic City when the oil companies tried
17 to store liquified carbon under the ocean
18 bed. And that scam was prevented by the
19 people, the good people of New Jersey, all
20 of us got together and did this.

21 I really can't believe this. Here it
22 is, April 27th, 2012, and still the message
23 is not sinking in to the policy makers and
24 to our leaders that the day for fossil fuels
25 is done. It's dead. No amount of money can

1 liven up that dead horse. Nothing.

2 The billions that we, the taxpayers,
3 have given the fossil fuel industry is over
4 \$72 billion of our money between 2002 and
5 2008 in subsidies. Why? So they can
6 destroy us and our future generations?

7 It's like an old dog. It's like
8 lipstick on a pig. I mean, to spend this
9 amount of money doing this kind of a program
10 is absolutely insane and it's absolutely
11 insulting to the Planet Earth and the people
12 that live here. Here we are in Atlantic
13 City and there's not even a supermarket for
14 the neighborhood. There's not one
15 supermarket for the people who live in
16 Atlantic City.

17 We have a lot of young people who have
18 no hope and no jobs, and yet here we are
19 contributing to these companies that are
20 seemingly rich and as greedy as hell trying
21 to get more money to do more construction.
22 For what? We are not benefiting at all from
23 it. In fact, it's choking off every good
24 program that the money should be going to,
25 like, food stamps, like, education.

1 64 schools are going to be closed in
2 Philadelphia. And it also leads to wars.
3 You know, this scramble over minerals
4 wherever they are, in the Congo, wherever
5 they are, under the ocean, and for oil in
6 remote areas like Afganistan or wherever
7 they are, I mean, it's fueling the end of
8 our whole civilization. And, meanwhile, the
9 big, fat cats who make up the one percent of
10 our whole population are laughing their ways
11 to the bank.

12 And I really appeal to you. New Jersey
13 is second in the nation for solar power, and
14 South Jersey contributes 25 percent to
15 renewable energy. I would ask that Option C
16 be the one that's proposed by you, the
17 messengers, from the people here, and I am
18 hoping that the message we get through is
19 that in the end we can't eat money.

20 Thank you.

21 MR. BENNETT: John Weber.

22 MR. WEBER: Jonathan H. Weber, with one
23 B, for the stenographer's sake.

24 I work for the Surf Rider Foundation on
25 the Northeast Regional Master. Surf Rider

1 has eighty chapters around the country. The
2 members are all volunteers. We have 250,000
3 masters, supporters, and activists around
4 the country.

5 Three years ago to the month, the
6 Secretary of the Interior was standing right
7 there at that podium in this room. If it
8 wasn't this room, it sure looked incredibly
9 just like this room.

10 Okay.

11 It was a bigger room. It was upstairs,
12 but there was about 350 people in this room
13 that all wanted to speak to him and tell him
14 what they thought about what was proposed at
15 that time, which was the actual leasing of
16 some of this stuff in the Atlantic. But I
17 was one of the lucky ones. I was one of the
18 chosen few that got to speak to him
19 directly, and what I was able to do was to
20 hand him a petition with 20,000 people's
21 signatures on it that we had gathered, the
22 Surf Rider Foundation had gathered, in the
23 course of a couple of weeks leading up to
24 this hearing once we knew it was happening,
25 and we handed it to him and we thought that

1 made a pretty good impression.

2 We're back now. We have a lot fewer
3 people, but that's just a quick history of
4 three years ago.

5 A little closer to two years ago one of
6 our Surf Rider Foundation members in Florida
7 was so upset by the prospect of offshore oil
8 drilling in his State of Florida in state
9 waters, he said I want some kind of
10 demonstration where people go out to the
11 beaches for ten minutes and hold hands, join
12 hands, across the sand to make a statement
13 against offshore oil drilling. And a couple
14 thousand people came out in Florida for that
15 at several different locations, and they
16 thought it was an amazing success.

17 So, they said let's do this nationally,
18 and this was before the deep water disaster
19 a few years ago.

20 So, in June of 2010 hundreds of
21 thousands of people joined hands across the
22 sand in this country and around the world
23 all making a statement that they did not
24 want offshore oil drilling of any type, and
25 this was something that was planned before

1 the deep water disaster.

2 So, there was a huge response against
3 this. You know, the seismic survey testing
4 is not that exactly and that's why there's
5 not that many people here because there's a
6 lot more people when there's a prospect of
7 drilling happening or a new lease is going
8 out in the Atlantic.

9 So, needless to say, I'm in favor of
10 Option Three. I just wanted to summarize,
11 but so far the foundation for a long time
12 has said this is not the answer. We have a
13 general website called not the answer, if
14 you want to go to that. People in the room
15 should definitely visit it.

16 And since I mentioned the deep water
17 horizon disaster, our chapters in Florida
18 have completed a study finding there's oil
19 and disbursements still washing up on the
20 beaches. And, obviously, there is a link to
21 it at our website, surf rider dot org, and
22 there's a link to those chapters. It's a
23 two hundred page report on their website, if
24 you want to go and read that. If you are a
25 little less ambitious, there's a 21 page

1 narrative also available on the website.
2 And if you're even less ambitious than that,
3 there's a two page summary from the media
4 and type.

5 But go give a look because they're
6 still finding oil and disbursements two
7 years later. But, of course, you know, the
8 Government, and BP, and everybody says
9 everything's fine. This is what these
10 people reported. This is a gateway to
11 drilling, and this what we don't want is
12 drilling.

13 The United States Government even says
14 if we have all these recoverable resources
15 and somehow brought them on line all at the
16 same time, it's not going to change the
17 price at the pump. Fossil fuels make us
18 think that, you know, gas prices are too
19 high, so we have to drill. It's just not
20 related. The U.S. Government says it will
21 bring the price of gas down by three cents
22 in twenty years. Twenty years from now
23 we'll pay three cents less at the pump.
24 That's not the answer.

25 We all know what the answers are. We

1 need renewable energy. We have not even
2 touched the surface of energy conservation
3 or energy efficiency. We have not even
4 scratched the surface yet.

5 There's actually some pretty good
6 energy efficiency going on in this room;
7 right? This is a rarity. You know, you
8 walk in a room and the lights are blazing or
9 whatever. My pet peeve is I drive around in
10 the middle of the day and I drive over the
11 Verezano Bridge and there's hundreds and
12 hundreds of street lights that are on all
13 day every day. We use oil and gas to make a
14 lot of electricity, and we haven't even
15 started to turn out the lights yet.

16 So, this is why people think this is so
17 foolish because we haven't even scratched
18 the surface yet. I know your job is energy
19 development offshore. So, energy
20 conservation's not your job. But this is
21 why the people are upset because we haven't
22 even scratched the surface.

23 So, in that sense, it doesn't make
24 sense to do the things that we know we need
25 to do. We all need a clean ocean zone, and

1 we like it this way. You have heard very
2 eloquently why people like it this way. We
3 need to keep it this way with a clean ocean
4 zone.

5 And to summarize, we like Option C.

6 Thanks very much.

7 MR. BENNETT: Greg Cesar.

8 No Greg?

9 Colby Tippin.

10 MS. TIPPIN: How do you do? My name is
11 Colby Tippin. I'm a resident of this
12 planet.

13 I don't represent anybody but myself
14 and my heart and my compassion for wild
15 life, for mother nature, for a better
16 environment, for human compassion. We are
17 the only species on this planet that is
18 motivated by greed and profit. There's no
19 other animal or plant on this planet that
20 takes more than they need.

21 I think this whole issue is about greed
22 and profit, and it is not about global
23 issues or improvement for the quality of
24 life for us or for the mammals. I am not a
25 speaker. I'm not even very well educated.

1 But I would like to invite you to think
2 about the mammals and the green life coming
3 to the land and disturbing the quality of
4 your life and having their world put upon
5 you, and I think that's what this whole
6 thing is going to do to the marine mammals.

7 We are very arrogant to think that we
8 can have our own way with this planet
9 because we're going to have our way to our
10 own death.

11 Thank you.

12 MR. BENNETT: Carry Ann Bernstein.

13 MS. BERNSTEIN: Good afternoon, thank
14 you for this opportunity. Carry Ann
15 Bernstein, recently retired, but I was
16 Atlantic City recycling coordinator and
17 clean committee coordinator for almost 25
18 years and I've spent a lot of time by the
19 beach and by the water.

20 Socrates said wisdom outweighs any
21 wealth. In Alaska the oil companies got
22 away with murder and the area never fully
23 recovered. The Gulf Coast, the nightmare's
24 still in play. Human victims have not
25 received their due, and let's not forget the

1 environmental and marine life disaster.

2 As a third generation Atlantic City'n,
3 I am horrified at the thought of wind farms
4 off AC, drilling for oil, the catastrophic
5 impact on marine life, and other negative
6 examples. A glaring area of concern, we
7 still do not have a realistic way of
8 containing oil spills in any remotely
9 expeditious manner.

10 Blue sea as far as you can see, no oil
11 spills for you or me. That's my motto. Our
12 new slogan is do Atlantic City. Shouldn't
13 we do Atlantic City? In Oprah Winfrey's
14 words, if it doesn't feel right, don't do
15 it. That's the lesson. Even doubt means
16 don't. It doesn't feel right, and there is
17 no doubt. Does AC equal Atlantic City or
18 absolute catastrophe waiting to happen?

19 Thank you.

20 MR. BENNETT: Jeffrey Hoffer.

21 MR. HOFFER: Good afternoon, my name is
22 Jeffrey Hoffer. I am the cochair of the
23 South Jersey Chapter of the Surf Rider
24 Foundation. I am also a volunteer
25 coordinator in the Clean Ocean Action in the

1 South Jersey Region. I'm a volunteer for
2 the Marine Mammal Stranding Center. I'm a
3 surfer. I'm a charter boat captain. I've
4 lived by the ocean all my life.

5 In 1972, I stepped in oil in Delaware.
6 We used to have to have zippo lighter fluid
7 next to our door just to go home because of
8 oil on our beaches back then from the spill
9 from a vessel traveling by. If drilling is
10 allowed offshore, if seismic activity is
11 allowed offshore, numerous things are going
12 to happen.

13 Number one, marine mammals and fish are
14 either going to be damaged in their brains,
15 in their bodies, their hearing apparatus.
16 They'll be driven away from the area. If
17 oil gets spilled or something happens on the
18 bottom, all the scallops and clammers are
19 going to be out of a job. Nobody's going to
20 be able to eat that. And there are billions
21 of dollars, tourism dollars, related to the
22 beaches, and from Maine all the way down to
23 Florida they're in jeopardy.

24 My family owns an oil and gas company.
25 I'm not going to say the name to not

1 jeopardize my family. We sold our holdings
2 in BP. We do not drill offshore. I know
3 seismic 3D. I know fracking. Trust me, I
4 know it.

5 What you want to do offshore is
6 absolutely unacceptable. We have enough oil
7 on dry land to get us by.

8 Thank you.

9 MR. BENNETT: Michael Donovan.

10 MR. DONOVAN: I'm Michael Donovan.

11 We have no shortage of wise people.
12 And when we don't listen to them, we live at
13 a certain peril that is quite unbelievable
14 especially in the 21st Century.

15 One of the Soloff's, one of the wiser
16 people that I remember, and I remember
17 meeting him, was Jacque Coustoe. Coustoe in
18 his final years said that he wanted people
19 to hear his apology. He spent his career
20 talking about the dangers to under sea
21 creatures, and he didn't imagine until it
22 was too late, he was in his last year, he
23 didn't imagine that all the time we, we
24 humans, are endangering. He used that word,
25 endangering.

1 People don't talk about Coustoe
2 anymore, and Lester Brown isn't talked about
3 much. Yet at the same time, he said, he
4 said that this generation of ours is the
5 first in the entire history of humanity, and
6 that goes back how many thousands of
7 generations, in the entire history of
8 humanity no other generation has faced the
9 problems, he said, that the earth we inhabit
10 may be uninhabitable, the first.

11 Now, the nice people of Atlantic City
12 have come here, essentially, to tell you
13 that, and they're telling you that in a
14 forceful way. They are talking about
15 standing up against big oil and a
16 thoughtless government. An attorney here
17 was telling you about some constitutional
18 rights that people are beginning to gather
19 for themselves to use.

20 Face the fact that this is the final
21 generation. We are not going to allow this
22 planet to be uninhabitable. We are going to
23 fight this, and we are going to fight it
24 with everything that we have.

25 That's all I have to say.

1 MR. BENNETT: Thank you.

2 That concludes the list of registered
3 speakers.

4 Did anyone register to speak that was
5 not given the opportunity to speak?

6 Peter Hughes.

7 MR. HUGHES: Peter Hughes from Cape
8 May, New Jersey.

9 My livelihood and the livelihood of my
10 family, and friends, and coworkers is solely
11 existing on what lives in the ocean in a
12 sustainable manner.

13 I came here today to educate myself on
14 the issues at hand. I was unaware of this
15 meeting until yesterday and didn't decide
16 until this morning that I was going to
17 attend and I'm very happy that I did.

18 I would like the opportunity to submit
19 written comments, but I would like the
20 opportunity to ask you to extend that
21 comment period until June 30th. If
22 possible. There are a lot of people. From
23 what I understand from your other public
24 hearing in states south of New Jersey, there
25 wasn't any representation from commercial

1 fishermen, and I find that very
2 disheartening.

3 So, there's a lot of people who are
4 ignorant to the fact that this is taking
5 place. So, I think that a longer comment
6 period, a thirty day extension to the
7 comment period, is not unreasonable to ask.
8 And, like I said, I came for the education,
9 and I got quite an education.

10 Thank you for allowing me to make my
11 comment.

12 MR. BENNETT: Thank you.

13 MS. HARPER: My name's Mary Harper, and
14 I'm one of the volunteer people who have the
15 time to attend hearings during the day. I
16 understand there were hearings in other
17 locations at night to allow working people
18 to attend, but none were scheduled here.
19 Maybe you think people in Atlantic City
20 don't work, but they do. And people
21 throughout New Jersey do too. Some people
22 had to drive three and four hours to get
23 here today.

24 I attended the hearing with Secretary
25 Salazar a couple years ago here and spoke

1 about my personal opposition to oil drilling
2 off our coast. I am a volunteer with the
3 Marine Mammal Stranding Center, with New
4 Jersey Fish and Wild life, and with U.S.
5 Fish and Wild Life. I don't represent any
6 of those organizations here and what I am
7 saying is just on my own behalf.

8 I am kind of appalled that our New
9 Jersey fishermen, our sports fishhermen, and
10 our commercial fishermen were not apprised
11 of this meeting, the proposal, or any other
12 matters. I found out about it because the
13 director of the Stranding Center sent me an
14 E-mail and said that this hearing was
15 happening.

16 So, I don't know if it's a secret
17 public hearing, or how well this was
18 publicized. We don't read the Federal
19 Register, generally, every day here in
20 Atlantic City. And, so, maybe public
21 notices need to be more wide spread.

22 So, that's disturbing to me.

23 At the hearing a couple of years ago,
24 Secretary Salazar asked me after it was very
25 clear I was opposed to drilling, but would I

1 be opposed to seismic testing. At the time,
2 I didn't even know what seismic testing
3 was. I have since learned what seismic
4 testing is. So, I would like to say for the
5 record that, yes, now that I have educated
6 myself about what it is and what the damage
7 is to our friends in the ocean and to us as
8 a result, I am opposed to seismic testing
9 here off our coast and all the way down to
10 Florida.

11 It's kind of crazy. It seems a little
12 insane to me that we have regulations
13 regarding what this man can bring home and
14 sell to the rest of us to eat, but it is
15 perfectly all right for this man to go out
16 and kill thirteen thousand marine mammals
17 and God knows how many fish to find out
18 what's on the ocean floor or what's under
19 the ocean floor. Doesn't that seem crazy to
20 you?

21 It seems really insane. How can he be
22 prevented and he be permitted to commit the
23 same act? I've worked all my life to
24 protect the species that remain here on this
25 earth with us. I've worked my entire life,

1 and you can see I am old.

2 Okay?

3 It is crazy, and that is simple, even
4 to some of us who are simple minded. Some
5 of us do have degrees also, by the way, and
6 I am one of them.

7 Okay?

8 And we don't need things simplified for
9 us. That's a little insulting. We are
10 complex people here in New Jersey. We are
11 educated. We know what we are talking
12 about. We love our ocean. We're passionate
13 about it, and we would like consideration in
14 being given proper and due notice of public
15 meetings and having the people who are
16 actually like the partners of our government
17 in this whole endeavor here who live in the
18 United States like our fisherman included in
19 discussion that will affect all of our
20 lives, and I think it is improper that that
21 wasn't done.

22 Thank you.

23 MR. BENNETT: Is there anyone else who
24 has not had an opportunity to speak?

25 MR. DEAR: Gene Dear, I'm a scuba

1 diver.

2 Different people have mentioned the
3 possible impact of seeing dead dolphins and
4 marine life washing up on the shore, but I
5 also think there is a problem with the sonic
6 testing killing massive amounts of sea life
7 and life just ending up dead on the floor
8 out of sight because this testing will be
9 taken in pretty deep water.

10 So, there's probably 99 percent of the
11 killing that you will never see. In 1976,
12 we had a big plank that blew off the coast
13 here, and we started, it was early in the
14 season, about this time, we started diving
15 and there was a layer of plank, a migration
16 of plank, and they all died off and settled
17 down to the bottom and oxygen levels dropped
18 down to zero.

19 Now, people who went fishing for blue
20 fish did not think much about it or didn't
21 know about it because they were still
22 catching blue fish. But, as divers, we got
23 out there and we saw the lobsters all out of
24 their holes, clams were all dead, all the
25 crabs were dead on the ocean bottom.

1 Anything without a swim line was dead.

2 So, besides the obvious dead life,
3 there's also the potential to see or have
4 much life dead and unknown to people.

5 I think that's it.

6 MR. BENNETT: Thank you.

7 Mr. Dickson.

8 MR. DICKSON: I'm reading this for
9 Assemblyman McKeon.

10 The evasive procedure of blasting
11 pulsating shocks of noise loud enough to
12 penetrate deep into the sea flat across vast
13 ocean area to search for oil and gas
14 reservoirs would degrade water quality and
15 marine habitat putting scores of sea life at
16 risk.

17 Seismic exploration could also hurt
18 commercial fisheries and prevent other clean
19 ocean uses like surfing, and boating, and
20 other forms of coastal tourism that would
21 come to a halt when the surveys are
22 ongoing.

23 The Jersey Shore is the life line of
24 our state's billion dollar tourism and
25 recreation industry that generates about

1 72,000 jobs. Seismic surveys and the result
2 in offshore oil drilling in the Atlantic
3 Seaboard would put our coastal economy in
4 peril. It also cannot risk further
5 contamination of our ocean with possible oil
6 spills. The worst environmental catastrophe
7 in U.S. history caused by an explosion on a
8 BP rig in the Gulf has shown us that oil and
9 water are a deadly mix.

10 New Jersey's 127,000 mile coastline and
11 our high winds make our state a natural
12 resource for harvesting an abundance of wind
13 power. We should continue to tap into
14 renewable and clean energy sources in the
15 outer shelf, which is wind, water, and
16 currents as an extension of our state's
17 sound environmental and clean energy policy
18 that have the overwhelming mandate of our
19 citizens.

20 Offshore drilling for oil off the
21 Atlantic Coast would reverse our progress in
22 that direction. I heard President Obama had
23 called for a plan in seismic exploration and
24 has placed a permanent ban on offshore
25 drilling on the Atlantic Coast.

1 MR. BENNETT: Is there anyone else who
2 would like to address the panel?

3 MR. BEASLEY: Greg Beasley, I'm
4 President of Atlantic County.

5 I just think it's a very interesting
6 process that you folks came down here, and I
7 guess the assuming framework for this, I
8 guess, is that somebody's thinking about
9 drilling for oil offshore. Therefore, we're
10 going to test.

11 Now, I think that's putting the cart
12 before the horse, actually.

13 I have a question about this chart
14 here.

15 I'm looking at these lines for the
16 different planning areas. Now, can you tell
17 me is the water going to stay in those
18 borders, and the marine life, are they all
19 going to stay there, or is that not in the
20 plan?

21 Just a question that I'm thinking
22 about.

23 What I'd like to say is what really
24 needs to be done is the people need to be
25 asked can we drill off these shores, off

1 these beautiful coastlines, and I think the
2 answer to that is it's not an appropriate
3 occurrence economically. And I think the
4 real question is to drill or not to drill,
5 and not to test or not to test.

6 Now, if you ask us if we will approve
7 drilling, we will say no. We're definitely
8 opposed to drilling off our beautiful
9 coastlines. And if we say no to drilling,
10 then there's no reason for testing.

11 MR. BENNETT: Thank you.

12 Does anyone else wish to speak?

13 Not hearing any, I want to remind
14 everyone that the comment period is open
15 until the end of May and we will take into
16 consideration the possibility of extending
17 it.

18 We appreciate everyone being here.

19 With that, we will conclude the
20 meeting.

21 Thank you.

22

23 (Whereupon, the meeting concluded at,
24 approximately, 5:00 p.m.)

25

1 C E R T I F I C A T E

2

3 I, Maryellen DeFeo, a Notary Public and
4 Professional Shorthand Reporter, do hereby state
5 that the foregoing is a true and accurate
6 transcript of the testimony as taken
7 stenographically by and before me at the time,
8 place and on the date hereinbefore set forth.

9 I do further state that I am neither a
10 relative nor employee nor attorney nor counsel of
11 any of the parties to this action, and that I am
12 neither a relative nor employee of such attorney
13 or counsel and that I am not financially
14 interested in this action.

15

16

17

18

Maryellen DeFeo

19

Notary Public, State of New Jersey

20

My commission expires 6/5/2015

21

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Date: 05/10/2012

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25

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