

From: [REDACTED]
To: [G&GEIS](#)
Subject: Comments on the Draft PEIS for Atlantic G&G Activities
Date: Friday, May 18, 2012 9:00:09 AM

Dear Mr. Goeke:

As a passionate supporter of climate protection and reduced dependence on oil, I am writing to comment on the environmental impact statement for the proposed seismic testing activities in the Mid-Atlantic. I express my opposition to seismic testing off the coast because, if approved, it would directly lead to expanded offshore drilling for oil and gas.

If oil companies are allowed to exploit the area off our coasts for drilling, scraping the barrel to find more petroleum, we know that the continued, deepening dependence on fossil fuels has consequences for the global climate. We are loading the dice for extreme weather and record high temperatures, and we can expect more severe hurricanes like Isabel, the most damaging hurricane to hit our region in decades. Ten people were killed by the storm surge, winds, heavy rains, and flooding from that storm, and \$1.85 billion? in damage resulted in Virginia. In order to stop global warming, we need to develop clean, renewable energy, like offshore wind power, without delay.

Please reject Alternatives A and B, which provide for seismic testing, and go forward with Alternative C which provides for renewable energy development only.

Respectfully,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]; [G&GEIS](#)
Subject: RE: Comments on the Draft PEIS for Atlantic G&G Activities
Date: Friday, May 18, 2012 6:51:01 PM

Gary Goeke
Chief, Regional Assessment Section
Office of Environment (MS 5410)
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region
1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard
New Orleans, LA 70123-2394

RE: Comments on the Draft PEIS for Atlantic G&G Activities

Dear Mr. Goeke:

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management should move forward expeditiously to finalize the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement with the proposed action. The Atlantic Ocean could hold tremendous potential for oil & gas development as well as for renewable energy, and the Bureau should proceed with a full survey of these resources and begin to plan for future development.

The federal government must allow for seismic studies to be conducted in an environmentally-friendly manner so that proper resource assessments can be made to support future lease sales. According to a 2006 Minerals Management Service assessment, the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf could contain somewhere between 1.12 billion and 7.57 billion barrels of oil and between 14.30 and 66.46 trillion cubic feet of gas. These estimates, however, are just estimates. The Atlantic can be a viable source of oil and gas development as well as renewable energy; however, much more exploration is needed to better understand what role offshore energy development in the Atlantic could play in our national energy strategy.

Exploration of the Atlantic is the first step towards accessing a potentially vital source of energy for American energy consumers. Coastal states and industry have expressed significant interest in tapping into these resources to bolster their states' economies, create jobs and boost our nation's energy security. According to a 2011 Woods Mackenzie study, oil and gas development in the Atlantic OCS could generate up to 140,000 jobs and \$14 billion in government revenue annually.

At a time of high unemployment and increasing budget deficits, the federal government should support efforts to increase American energy production. In addition to proceeding with exploration in the Atlantic, I would urge the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and the federal government to evaluate ways to move forward with leasing in the Atlantic now.

Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [G&GEIS](#)
Subject: Comments on Draft PEIS for Atlantic G&G Activities
Date: Monday, May 28, 2012 9:07:56 PM

Re: Comments on Draft PEIS for Atlantic G&G Activities

I am writing to advocate against seismic exploration in the Atlantic Ocean, from Delaware to mid-Florida.

Oil exploration leads directly to oil drilling. Two years later, the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill is still impacting the environment, economy and marine life in the Gulf. The draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Study downplays many of the risks of seismic surveys. I urge you to opt not to engage in this drastic process on the East Coast.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

From: [NRDC](#) on behalf of [REDACTED]
To: [G&GEIS](#)
Subject: Comments on the Draft PEIS for Atlantic G&G Activities
Date: Wednesday, June 27, 2012 5:21:00 PM

Jun 27, 2012

Chief, BOEM Gary D. Goeke, Chief of the BOEM
1201 Elmwood Park Blvd
New Orleans, LA 70123

Dear Chief, BOEM Goeke, Chief of the BOEM,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. I support Alternative C, disallowing any oil and gas exploration off the east coast.

BOEM fails to address the wide-ranging impacts that repeated, high-intensity airgun surveys will have on whales and other marine species. The industry's airguns produce the loudest sounds humans put in the water short of explosives, and can undermine foraging and breeding in endangered marine mammals over enormous distances. Even according to the government's own analysis -- which underestimates harm -- the oil and gas industry would injure up to 140,000 whales, dolphins, and porpoises, and disrupt their vital behavior more than 13 million times should the administration's plan go through.

It makes no sense to open the entire mid- and south Atlantic to this dangerous activity, with woefully inadequate mitigation and no meaningful assessment of the cumulative harm to wildlife. Not only would it have a significant impact on the environment, it would open the floodgates to offshore drilling, putting our oceans at even more risk.

I urge BOEM not to go forward with this action.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

From: [Sierra Club](#) on behalf of [REDACTED]
To: [G&GEIS](#)
Subject: Draft PEIS for Atlantic Ocean Seismic Exploration
Date: Thursday, May 24, 2012 1:21:38 PM

May 24, 2012

Mr. Gary D. Goeke
1201 Elmwood Park Blvd.
New Orleans, LA 70123

Dear Mr. Goeke,

I urge the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to pursue Alternative C. Allow no exploration for oil and gas and only what's minimally necessary to support renewable energy development.

Constantly combing hundreds of acres of ocean, air gun blasts just three miles from the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, WILL have a devastating impact on fish and marine life. It will have an impact on the North Atlantic Right Whale, only about 400 of which are left in the world and it will depress commercial fish catches. Just ask a number of foreign countries required to compensate fishermen for their losses due to seismic activities.

Virginians such as myself have long treasured our beautiful coastal environment. Our families vacation along its clean beaches and we all benefit from the tourism and fishing industries that depend on healthy ocean waters. Our coastal environment is too precious to risk with ANY drilling-related activity. While the Gulf and its people are today still reeling from the BP gulf oil spill disaster, other spills have since occurred off the coast of Scotland in the North Sea and off the Brazilian coast. The risk continues to be real and formidable. Why even kick off the process with exploration?

This intense level of seismic study is completely unnecessary to support offshore wind development, a clean energy source we can all support. I stand hand-in-hand with other concerned citizens across Virginia ready to assist BOEM in powering America with clean renewable energy ASAP, but we won't accept offshore drilling off Virginia, and we won't accept putting our marine and fish life at risk from its associated seismic surveys.

The best and most prudent policy is to not allow this destructive seismic testing. The time has come to wean this country off oil and other fossil fuels, not continue to despoil our environment in a desperate effort to drain the last few drops of oil. I would hope this Administration has the courage to do that and not pander to API and the oil industry.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [G&GEIS](#)
Subject: I Oppose Seismic Surveys--Geological and Geophysical Exploration of Atlantic OCS
Date: Saturday, April 28, 2012 12:23:29 PM

Dear Minerals Management Service:

I'm writing to oppose seismic surveying for oil exploration along the mid and south Atlantic. Please accept my comments contained within this email when considering your Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for Future Industry Geological and Geophysical Activity on the Mid- and South Atlantic OCS.

Seismic testing and surveys will have devastating impacts on marine ecosystems. The powerful airguns used in these surveys will have enormous environmental impacts on our oceans, on both marine mammals (including endangered whales) and commercial fisheries off our coasts. These surveys blast high-intensity sound into the water every few seconds for months on end – resulting in what Dr. Christopher Clark, the director of Cornell's Bioacoustics Research Program, has called "the most intrusive form of man-made undersea noise short of actual naval warfare."

Airgun surveys are known to significantly disrupt endangered species of whales and commercial fisheries on a massive scale. A single airgun array off the northeast coast caused endangered fin and humpback whales to stop singing – a behavior essential to their mating and foraging – over an area at least as large as New Mexico (100,000 square nautical miles) and possibly as large as Alaska (800,000 square nautical miles). Whales depend on sound for their survival – but airgun noise is loud enough to mask their calls over literally thousands of miles, destroying their capacity to communicate and breed. The latest science from NOAA and Cornell shows that endangered North Atlantic right whales – which calve off the coast of Georgia and Florida – are extremely vulnerable.

Airguns have been shown to drive away a wide range of marine mammals, from great baleen whales to harbor porpoises, and they have been implicated in the long-term loss of marine mammal biodiversity off the coast of Brazil. Airguns also affect fish behavior and fisheries on a broad scale: airguns have been shown to dramatically depress catch rates of various commercial species (including cod, haddock, and rockfish) over thousands of square kilometers, leading fishermen in Norway and other parts of the world to seek industry compensation for their losses.

There is broad scientific agreement that MMS' current measures to reduce harm from airguns are inadequate. Instead, MMS must keep airguns out of sensitive environmental areas and promote use of greener alternatives to airguns. According to industry experts, green technologies that would substantially cut the environmental footprint of airguns in many areas can be available for commercial use in 3-5 years or less.

Please consider the environmental impacts of seismic surveying and the alternatives.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [G&GEIS](#)
Subject: Support Alternative C: Atlantic Geological & Geophysical PEIS
Date: Monday, May 28, 2012 9:00:14 PM

Mr. Gary D. Goeke

I am writing in support of Alternative "C" and to ask that the agency release an Environmental Impact Statement focused on the development of renewable energy only. Seismic airgun activity for oil and gas exploration has a huge environmental footprint and would produce significant impacts on marine mammals, sea turtles, fishes, and other marine life. Over the next eight years - according to the administration's own estimates - seismic exploration would injure up to 138,500 marine mammals and disrupt marine mammal feeding, calving, breeding, and other vital activities more than 13.5 million times. Airgun noise also affects fish behavior and fisheries on a broad scale, displacing commercial species of fish over thousands of square kilometers. BOEM must keep airguns out of sensitive environmental areas and promote the use of greener alternatives. Thanks for this chance to support Alternative "C".

Respectfully,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [G&GEIS](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Tell the BOEM to Open the OCS for Energy Development
Date: Wednesday, June 20, 2012 9:43:00 AM

Dear Mr. Goeke,

Along with more than 9 million other Americans, my livelihood depends on my job in the oil and natural gas industry. Our industry is eager to explore, produce and refine the energy that fuels the American way of life, and to do so we must continue to promote oil and natural gas production in the United States.

We are ready to invest in exploration off the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), and the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) from the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management is a necessary first step to begin gathering the data necessary for better energy resource estimates.

We can create more jobs and generate more revenue if we're allowed to responsibly develop and produce more of the oil and natural gas we need here in the United States. However, increased development requires that the industry and government share a vision of the potential benefits and act as partners to fully realize them.

The oil and natural gas industry already supports 7.7 percent of the U.S. economy, delivering more than \$86 million a day in government revenue -- and since 2000, has invested more than \$2 trillion in U.S. capital projects to advance all forms of energy, including alternatives.

While the PEIS is a step in the right direction, there is still work to be done to initiate a forward-thinking, comprehensive energy policy. I urge you to open areas in the Atlantic for oil and natural gas development.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

From: [Oceana](#)
To: [G&GEIS](#)
Subject: Don't submit the Atlantic to harmful seismic testing
Date: Monday, July 02, 2012 3:44:47 PM

Dear Mr. Goeke,

This letter is from 720 concerned citizens. I strongly oppose the harmful seismic oil and gas exploration program that is proposed for the Mid Atlantic and South Atlantic outer continental shelf (OCS) planning areas. The seismic activity is not only injurious to marine wildlife, but it is also the first step toward harmful offshore drilling and spilling off our coasts. **We will never be able to drill our way to low gas prices or energy independence**, so there is no justification for subjecting marine animals to the extremely damaging effects of airgun noise.

The intense blasts of airgun arrays are some of the loudest underwater sounds humans make, short of explosives. This is exceedingly disruptive for all marine animals that rely on hearing to feed, mate, travel, communicate and many other behaviors necessary for survival. Airgun noise is loud enough to mask whale calls over literally thousands of miles, destroying their capacity to communicate and breed. **It can drive endangered whales to abandon their habitat and cease foraging**, again over vast areas of ocean. Closer interactions with airguns can cause hearing loss, injury and death. The south Atlantic is the only calving area for one of the most endangered whales in the world, the North Atlantic right whale, and these airguns pose serious threats to their future.

Airguns also displace commercial species of fish as far as thousands of square kilometers away from where they are used. This has reduced catch rates of species such as cod, haddock, and rockfish across areas as large as the state of Rhode Island, leading fishermen in Norway and other parts of the world to seek industry compensation for their losses. This poses a huge threat to commercial and recreational fishing off the mid- and southeast Atlantic that (not including New Jersey) **generate \$11.8 billion annually and support 222,000 jobs.**

Seismic exploration is the first of many dangerous and polluting steps in offshore oil and gas development. For all the threats that offshore drilling imposes on our oceans and coastal economies, there is very little reward. According to the U.S. Energy Information Agency, fully developing all of our recoverable offshore oil reserves everywhere would only lower pump prices by 3 cents – and would take twenty years to do so.

I urge you to choose Alternative "C" (the "no-action" alternative) which will keep dangerous oil and gas exploration off our coasts, and instead focus on developing renewable energy.

Signed,
720 concerned citizens; delivered by Oceana



From: [REDACTED]
To: [G&GEIS](#)
Subject: Re: Comments on the Draft PEIS for Atlantic G&G Activities
Date: Monday, July 02, 2012 11:37:16 AM

Dear Mr. Goeke:

Thank you for the chance to comment on the Atlantic G&G activities PEIS. As a coastal constituent adjacent to the Mid- and South Atlantic Planning Areas, I encourage BOEM to adopt Alternative C—the no action alternative—in its programmatic environmental impact statement. My concerns regarding the potential impacts oil and gas exploration and development could have on the Atlantic coast's natural environment, tourism and fishing industries, and quality of life are outlined below.

Offshore exploration and drilling poses a number of risks to our region's coastal economy and quality of life. Acoustic pollution caused by oil and gas G & G activities such as the use of airguns, aeromagnetic surveys, and the drilling of test wells has proven associations with major impacts to marine mammals, turtles, and fish. Waterborne pollution such as drilling fluid and potential test well blowouts further compromise the health of our waters.

These risks would jeopardize the vitality of our coastal tourism and fishing industries. Our region's tourism and recreation industry generates tens of billions of dollars in revenue per year and employs hundreds of thousands of coastal residents. Furthermore, tens of thousands of people are employed in the fishing industry, and commercial and recreational fishing account for tens of billions of dollars in sales per year. Preserving the integrity of our beaches, marshes, and waterways for our coastal residents and the many tourists from all over the world who share our enjoyment of these special places is of the utmost importance.

The risks of offshore oil and gas exploration and drilling outweigh any potential benefit they may bring. I therefore urge you to implement Alternative C and not allow G & G activities for oil and gas in the Mid- and South Atlantic Planning Areas.

Thank you.

[REDACTED]