

February 16, 2010

Re: Virginia Lease Sale 220

Dear Secretary Salazar,

We, the undersigned Virginia residents, applaud your commitment to thorough environmental study and urge your postponement of Virginia's Lease Sale 220.

Drilling has not occurred off our Atlantic coast for almost 30 years and thus information on the possible effects of Atlantic drilling "is 30 years out of date," as you have pointed out.

Not only are there huge gaps in the scientific information needed to evaluate the impact of drilling off Virginia's coast, but Virginia's offshore zone is a small microcosm in a much larger coastal and oceanic ecosystem. Rather than singling out a small area off a single state for an environmental study, the Atlantic coast as a whole needs to be studied.

The Bush-era drilling program (2007-2012) is also flawed for failing to complete the required environmental analysis as noted in a recent D.C. Court of Appeals decision.

We urge instead your expedient processing of offshore wind development. Our wind resources vastly exceed the energy potential of all the oil and gas thought to lie off our shores, without the huge risks to the environment, Navy and NASA operations that would accompany offshore drilling.

Very truly yours,

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