

March 8, 2018

President Donald Trump  
White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC

Secretary Ryan Zinke  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear President Trump and Secretary Zinke,

As religious leaders, we write in opposition to expanded oil and gas drilling and seismic testing in public waters. Offshore drilling brings unacceptable risks to God's oceans and coastal communities.

Offshore drilling could produce perilous consequences like oil spills that can poison the God's oceans, including wildlife and clean water. No oil company or Administration can guarantee the safety of drilling offshore.

Because the faith community serves as first responders in disasters, we know painfully well the devastation that oil spills can cause to our communities. It is well documented that oil spills can wreak havoc on ecosystems and local businesses and residents alike. Seismic testing that often precedes offshore oil and gas development also harms marine life, including imperiled sea mammals and important fisheries.

Any increased oil and gas drilling offshore will inevitably lead to increased pollution, oil spills, and harm to marine life. Drilling not only impacts marine life, but also impacts people who depend upon the oceans for food and jobs.

Expanding drilling into our Arctic, Atlantic, Eastern Gulf of Mexico and Pacific waters—still largely unspoiled by drilling's inherent hazards and harms—would put our coastal residents, businesses, oceans, and climate at grave risk. Exposing the Gulf of Mexico to additional drilling would further burden residents with the pollution and risks that have already caused great, lasting harm to the region.

God created the oceans with an abundance of life and, as stewards of God's earth, we should work to preserve and protect God's marine creation. As people of faith, we also uphold our duty to love our neighbors. Oceans provide food sources and livelihoods for millions in the U.S. and globally.

We urge the Trump Administration to focus on investments in renewable sources of energy such as wind and solar, as well as maximize our energy efficiency, instead of looking to expand fossil fuel exploration in God's ocean. God entrusts us to be good stewards of God's oceans and coasts. We should honor this sacred duty and position our country as a global leader in energy stewardship.

We ask you to join us as God's steward of the oceans and to respect the local residents, businesses, and millions of Americans who have already made clear their support for preserving, not drilling off our nation's beaches.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Dr. Jennifer Copeland  
North Carolina Council of Churches  
Raleigh

The Rev. Beverly Wallace  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Clayton

The Rev. Michael McClain  
National Baptist Convention USA  
Charlotte

The Rev. Lee Hull Moses  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
Greensboro

The Rev. Art Smoker  
Mennonite Church  
Mars Hill

The Rev. Dennis Testerman  
Presbyterians for Earth Care  
Concord

The Rev. Jaye White  
North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church  
Fayetteville

The Rev. David Guthrie  
Moravian Church in America-Southern Province  
Winston-Salem

The Rev. Tamara Franks  
High Country United Church of Christ  
Vilas

The Rev. Sekinah Hamlin  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
Durham

The Rev. Dr. T. Anthony Spearman  
North Carolina Council of Churches Governing Board President  
Greensboro

The Rev. Isaac Villegas  
Mennonite Church  
Durham

The Rev. Steve Hickle  
North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church  
Raleigh

The Rev. Jim Abbott  
Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina  
Asheville

The Rev. Joseph Brown  
Eastern North Carolina Episcopal District  
African Methodist Episcopal Church  
Fayetteville

The Rev. Patrick Campbell  
United Church of Christ Southern Conference  
Morganton

The Rev. David Guthrie  
Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina  
Greenville

The Rev. Rob Jackson  
Presbytery of Salem  
Presbyterian Church (USA)  
Greensboro

The Rev. Sonja Lee  
Unity Fellowship Movement  
Charlotte

The Rev. Otis Robinson  
Reformed Churches of God in Christ International  
Winston-Salem

The Rev. Jill Staton Bullard  
Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina  
Durham

The Rev. Robert Williams  
Williams Memorial C Christian Methodist Episcopal  
High Point

The Rev. John Cradle  
St. Joseph Christian Methodist Episcopal  
Chapel Hill

The Rev. Ronald White, Sr.  
Young Missionary Baptist  
Raleigh

The Rev. Hazel Height  
Greater St. Paul Miss Baptist  
Durham

The Rev. Brian Thompson  
Simon Temple AME Zion  
Chapel Hill

The Rev. Doris Gorham  
Beebe Memorial Christian Methodist Episcopal  
Washington

The Rev. Barbara McCollum  
Holsey Memorial Christian Methodist Episcopal  
Statesville

The Rev. Robert Scott  
St. Paul Baptist  
Charlotte

The Rev. Cureton Johnson  
First Baptist  
Fayetteville

The Rev. David Mitchell  
Mount Gilead Baptist  
Durham

The Rev. Jerry Cannon  
C.N. Jenkins Memorial Presbyterian  
Charlotte

The Rev. Susannah Tuttle  
Unitarian Universalist

Sister Rose Marie Tresp  
Roman Catholic