



MEMORANDUM

AGENDA ITEM #IV.F

DATE: FEBRUARY 26, 2018

TO: COUNCIL MEMBERS

FROM: STAFF

SUBJECT: 2019-2024 NATIONAL OCS OIL AND GAS LEASING DRAFT PROPOSED PROGRAM

The U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), via the Florida State Clearinghouse Project SAI#: FL201801108234C, requested comments on their 2019 - 2024 Oil and Gas Leasing Program. Comments may be submitted online or by mail to the BOEM until March 9, 2018.

The project website states “the National OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program (National OCS Program) for oil and gas development establishes a schedule of oil and gas lease sales proposed for planning areas of the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). The Program specifies the size, timing, and location of potential leasing activity that the Secretary of the Interior determines will best meet national energy needs. Currently BOEM is working under the 2017-2022 National OCS Program. However, as directed in [Executive Order 13795](#) (April 28, 2017) and [Secretary's Order 3350](#) (May 1, 2017), BOEM is initiating a process to develop a new National OCS Program for 2019-2024 to, upon completion, replace the 2017-2022 Program.” Additional information can be found at: <https://www.boem.gov/National-OCS-Program/>

Council staff’s January review of the 2019 – 2024 Proposed Plan did not find in-depth consideration of the environmental impacts of the proposed leases. Rather, the plan depends on “environmental sensitivity scores” without mention of the inputs or confidence interval related to the scores. The plan states that the Gulf of Mexico region received a high sensitivity score within this index. Further, the plan admits that oil and gas exploration “will never be totally risk-free” and mentions improvements made to safety since the devastating 2010 *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill but lacks detail regarding enforcement of those improvements.

At its January 22nd meeting, Councilmembers expressed agreement that additional information was needed to take an informed position which balances competing needs. There was also agreement that the priorities of the State of Florida, as well as regional and local stakeholders, should not be pre-empted.

Recommendation

Review the attached letter and provide direction.





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February 26, 2018

Ms. Kelly Hammerle, Chief
National Oil and Gas Leasing Program Development and Coordination Branch
Office of Strategic Resources, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (VAM-LD)
45600 Woodland Road
Sterling, Virginia 20166-9216

Re: 2019-2024 Draft Proposed Oil and Gas Leasing Program

Dear Ms. Hammerle:

The South Florida Regional Planning Council received a request for comment concerning the 2019-2024 Draft Proposed Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program (Draft Proposed Program) proposed by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. The Council discussed this request at its January 22 Council meeting.

Councilmembers noted that the Council’s commentary would be more helpful with additional information about the Administration’s assessment of energy production policy, energy security, drilling and seismic testing considerations, and military, environmental, and economic implications related to the Draft Proposed Program. Although the discussion was general in nature, we did focus on possible effects if Florida and possibly other gulf or coastal states were exempted from the Draft Proposed Program. We questioned the efficacy of a Florida exemption if seismic testing and drilling occur elsewhere in the Gulf of Mexico – literally a fluid environment. We are uncertain, but concerned, about possible adverse effects from seismic testing and from leaks or spillage; observing that such effects may not be localized in a marine environment.

Considering relevant regional concerns that we monitor regularly, especially with concern for Florida’s sensitive environment, wildlife, and tourism-based economy, and absent additional information with respect to production goals as well potential environmental impacts, our Council deemed appropriate Governor Scott’s, Senator Rubio’s and Senator Nelson’s opposition to offshore drilling off Florida’s coast for the foreseeable future.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on a matter of such significant importance. It is critical for the State of Florida, along with regional and local policymakers and stakeholders, to participate as full partners as policies are developed.

Please keep us informed and contact us if we can provide additional information or otherwise be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Frank Caplan
SFRPC Chair

cc: The Honorable Noah Valenstein, Secretary, FDEP

