



RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS

P.O. Box 12967
Austin, Texas 78711-2967
(512) 463-7140
FAX (512) 463-7161

CHRISTI CRADDICK
CHAIRMAN

August 16, 2017

Ms. Kelly Hammerle
National Program Manager
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
45600 Woodland Road
Mailstop VAM-LD
Sterling, Virginia 20166

RE: Request for Information on 2019-2024 Outer Continental Shelf Oil & Gas Leasing Program

Dear Ms. Hammerle:

As the Chair of the Railroad Commission of Texas, which has regulatory oversight of the Texas energy industry, I write today in response to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's request for information on the development of the federal government's 2019-2024 offshore oil and gas leasing program to convey my strong support for a new program that includes all 26 Outer Continental Shelf planning areas.

U.S. federal waters contain approximately 148 billion barrels of oil equivalent in undiscovered resources, which is enough energy to meet the nation's oil and natural gas needs for more than a decade. The Texas economy stands to greatly benefit from expanded offshore energy exploration. In FY 2014, offshore oil and gas activity in the Gulf of Mexico generated over \$64 billion in Gross Domestic Product and over 650,000 jobs, including 193,000 jobs and over \$20 billion in GDP for Texas. That same year, the industry provided over \$7 billion in revenues to federal, state and local governments, making the industry one of the largest sources of revenue for the nation.

By expanding access in the Gulf of Mexico, Texas and the Gulf States will continue to supply Americans with reliable, U.S. crude oil, petroleum products and natural gas. This means Texas businesses and families spend less on energy and more on goods, services, and investments that are vital to maintaining and enhancing our economy and standard of living. One private industry expert, Quest Offshore Resources, has estimated that an increase in Gulf of Mexico offshore oil and gas activity could support more than 62,000 jobs and over \$5 billion in annual GDP for Texas alone.

Excluding regions from leasing consideration at the outset, and in the absence of critical environmental analysis, would be premature and potentially harmful to efforts to enhance American energy security. One of the great benefits of the shale revolution has been our ability to reduce our reliance on foreign sources of energy, enabling us to export our vast resources to allies overseas. Indeed, energy policy is foreign policy, and expanded access to American energy is good for American interests.

For the benefit of citizens and businesses across Texas, I respectfully urge the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to include all offshore planning areas in the development of the Draft Proposed Program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christi".

Christi Craddick
Chairman, Railroad Commission of Texas