



HENRY DARGAN McMASTER
GOVERNOR

June 13, 2025

The Honorable Doug Burgum
Secretary of the Interior
U.S. Department of Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Burgum:

I am once again asking that South Carolina be excluded from the National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program. As you know, in September of 2020, President Trump issued a Presidential Memorandum protecting the South Carolina coast from oil and gas exploration until 2032. I humbly ask that you and the president take a similar action this time around.

South Carolina's coastline is one of the most pristine in the country, and offshore drilling is simply not in its best interest. The state's 187 miles of ocean coastline and 2,876 miles of tidal shoreline are home to world-renowned beaches, sea islands, and salt marshes—many of which are permanently protected from development. This unspoiled natural beauty is the foundation of a \$29 billion tourism industry supporting millions of annual visitors and tens of thousands of jobs in communities like Myrtle Beach, Charleston, Hilton Head, and Beaufort. These communities rely heavily on the health of our coastal environment. We cannot afford to jeopardize it.

It is because of this that every coastal municipality in South Carolina has passed a resolution opposing oil and gas exploration activities offshore. I stand firmly with them. We simply cannot afford to accept the risk of the adverse environmental impact attendant to offshore drilling.

Notably, South Carolina's commercial fishing industry also depends on a thriving offshore ecosystem—one that would be severely disrupted by oil and gas exploration. The potential environmental damage far outweighs any theoretical economic benefit.

South Carolina has a long and proud tradition of conservation—one I am committed to preserving. Our state maintains 47 state parks, two national forests, and Congaree National Park, which protects the largest intact tract of old-growth bottomland hardwood forest in the Southeast.

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We are also home to four federally protected National Wildlife Refuges: Cape Romain, Ernest F. Hollings ACE Basin, Santee, and Waccamaw—which collectively span over 115,000 acres of barrier islands, blackwater rivers, and marshlands.

Finally, it is no secret that South Carolina lies squarely in the path of Atlantic hurricanes. We are struck regularly by severe weather events coming from the Atlantic. Hurricanes Hugo, Matthew, and Irma, for example, caused widespread flooding, billions of dollars in damages, and tragic loss of life. Offshore oil infrastructure would only increase South Carolina's vulnerability.

For all these reasons, I respectfully urge the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to reaffirm South Carolina's exclusion from offshore oil and gas leasing in the upcoming program.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Henry D. McMaster". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Henry" and the last name "McMaster" being the most prominent parts.

Henry Dargan McMaster