

April 19, 2016

Ms. Kelly Hammerle
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (VAM-LD)
45600 Woodland Road
Sterling, Virginia 20166

Dr. Jill K. Lewandowski, Ph.D.
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (VAM-OEP)
45600 Woodland Road
Sterling, Virginia 20166

RE: 2017-2022 OCS Oil & Gas Leasing Proposed Program (BOEM-2016-0003) and Draft PEIS (BOEM-2016-0002)

Dear Ms. Hammerle and Dr. Lewandowski:

On behalf of **the Houma-Terrebonne Chamber of Commerce (H-TCC)**, I write to urge the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) to finalize a 2017-2022 leasing program and Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) that includes the Gulf of Mexico without any further exclusions or restrictions.

The experience in the Gulf of Mexico demonstrates the significance of offshore energy development to the Gulf Coast states and coastal communities. As BOEM acknowledges in the Proposed Program, the Gulf is “one of the richest oil and natural gas regions in the world,” and Gulf Coast states and communities strongly support Gulf of Mexico energy development. A source of nearly 20% of the nation’s crude oil supply, the Gulf remains one of America’s greatest energy resources and we must continue to support its safe development. In FY 2014, offshore oil and gas activity in the Gulf of Mexico contributed over \$64 billion in GDP, supported 651,000 jobs, and provided over \$7 billion in revenue to the federal government.

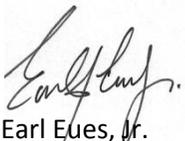
Continued and expanded access to all areas of the Gulf of Mexico will increase these economic gains for Gulf Coast residents and businesses and ensure that the Gulf Coast continues to supply American consumers across the country with reliable crude oil, petroleum products, and natural gas.

As Secretary Jewell has stated, actions to improve safety have resulted in “the most aggressive and comprehensive offshore oil and gas regulatory reforms in the nation’s history.” Industry has also advanced state-of-the-art containment systems that further minimize the risk of a catastrophic oil spill. BOEM should account for these improvements and advances and adopt the Proposed Action (Alternative A) identified in the Draft PEIS.

Significantly, in addition to energy and economic security benefits, BOEM has concluded that the *removal* of the Gulf from the next leasing program would cause incremental environmental and social *costs* between ~\$5 billion and ~\$13 billion due to a greater reliance on energy from other sources.

A sensible energy policy must include the Gulf’s offshore resources to ensure access to affordable, reliable domestic energy for years to come. For the benefit of citizens and businesses across the Gulf of Mexico region and the greater United States, **H-TCC** urges BOEM to finalize a 2017-2022 program and PEIS that includes the Gulf of Mexico without any further exclusions or restrictions.

Sincerely,



Earl Eues, Jr.
Chairman of the Board