

Business Alliance for Protecting the Atlantic Coast

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For Immediate Release

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Tens of Thousands of Businesses Call on President Obama to Permanently Protect the Atlantic Coast from Offshore Drilling

Washington, DC—The Business Alliance for Protecting the Atlantic Coast (BAPAC) delivered a [letter](#) today to the Obama administration asking the President to permanently protect the Atlantic seaboard from offshore oil drilling and seismic airgun blasting.

The signatures on the letter represent over 35,000 businesses and 500,000 commercial fishing families.

Under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, the President has the authority to permanently withdraw lands along the outer continental shelf from mineral leasing.

“Protecting the Atlantic Coast’s tourism, recreation and commercial fishing economies from offshore drilling activities, petroleum industrialization and oil spills is a top priority for the tens of thousands of businesses represented in our letter,” said **Frank Knapp, co-founder of BAPAC and president/CEO of the South Carolina Small Business Chamber of Commerce.**

“This is the most important decision that will ever be made about the Atlantic Coast; without it—businesses in coastal states face too much uncertainty to invest and hire employees. We’re worrying about impending impacts of seismic airgun blasting in the short term, and the looming threat of a BP Deepwater Horizon-like disaster or any oil spill in the long term. That’s not the kind of environment that lends itself to economic growth.”

Representatives of BAPAC met with Obama administration officials in November to convey their opposition to offshore drilling and seismic airgun blasting. In addition to the individual businesses from Maine to Florida signing the letter, 16 chambers of commerce and trade associations support BAPAC’s advocacy efforts.

“As a coastal business and property owner, any thought of offshore drilling scares the heck out of me,” said **Kevin Scalia, owner of Hatteras Island Boardsports in Avon, NC**. “The survival of my business, and in fact my entire town, depends on the coastal waters being clean. Any oil contamination, or even talk of contamination, would destroy our tourist-driven market.”

“Our family owned businesses (since the late 50's, passed through generations) are located one block from the Atlantic Ocean,” said **Debbie Carter owner of Caughtman Enterprises in Georgetown, SC**. “This location is and has been a clean and pleasant beach for seasonal, family oriented vacations. Any offshore activity could destroy our beaches, community and the livelihood that our grandfather worked so hard to establish and ensure would thrive for generations to come.”

“We own and operate a restaurant and hot sauce company located two blocks from the beach. Any threat to our beaches is a direct threat to our livelihood,” said **Matt Pittaluga, owner of Hank Sauce in Sea Isle City, NJ**. “As the son of a commercial fisherman, I understand the importance of a healthy ocean as it has given me everything I have.”

“It's a grave threat to the local tourist economy, delicate ecosystems and lifestyles of millions of people who live, work and vacation along Virginia's coastline,” said **George Kotaride, owner of Doughs Boy's Pizza Restaurant in Virginia Beach, VA**.

“Literally every dollar that drives the Outer Banks economy comes from a clean, healthy coastline,” said **Robert Walker, publisher/co-owner of Suite P in Kill Devil Hills, NC**.

“Tourism alone in Dare County is a \$1 billion dollar industry with more than 12,000 jobs. There are no other alternatives. Offshore drilling threatens not just our livelihoods, but our very way of life.”

“Our long-term economic stability and growth depends on the billions spent annually in local communities by people seeking time outdoors,” said **Jane Ochsenein, owner of Gator Bait Adventure Tours in Myrtle Beach, SC**. “A clean, safe environment creates millions of domestic jobs, local businesses and economic security for entire communities.”

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