



PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: David Hawkins
Communication Manager
732-291-0055
Dave@LittoralSociety.org

Littoral Society Stands with Governor in Effort to STOP Offshore Oil/Gas Drilling

The American Littoral Society stood with New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy on Friday, April 20 as he emphatically declared New Jersey isn't open to the offshore oil industry.

Joined on the boardwalk of Point Pleasant Beach by a bipartisan group of state lawmakers, as well as environmental leaders, and Jersey Shore residents, Murphy signed the Shore Tourism and Ocean Protection (STOP) from Offshore Oil and Gas Act, which unanimously approved by the NJ senate in late March. The law was co-sponsored by Sen. Chris Brown, R-Atlantic, and Sen. Jeff Van Drew, D-Cape May.

The law prohibits offshore drilling in state waters and bans the leasing of tidal or submerged lands in state waters for oil or natural gas production, exploration or development. It will also block the Department of Environmental Protection from issuing any permits and approvals for the development of offshore drilling facilities and the transport of any oil drilled in federal waters into the state.

The new law is in response to the Trump administration proposal to open the Atlantic coast to oil and natural gas exploration, which could endanger New Jersey's tourism and fishing industries. Several other east coast state have recently enacted similar laws.

"We applaud Governor Phil Murphy for signing this legislation to provide much needed safeguards against the specter of oil drills and spills off our beaches," said Tim Dillingham, Executive Director of the American Littoral Society. "New Jersey's coast and ocean are at the heart of our state, our communities and our shore economies. An oil spill would be catastrophic to all of these. There is simply too much at risk to allow for offshore oil and gas drilling.

On January 4, 2018 the US Department of the Interior released a Draft Proposed Plan for new offshore oil and gas leases. The radical proposal would place over 90 percent of our offshore waters up for lease to the oil and gas industry.

This ill-conceived leasing plan puts our coastal communities, health, and national security in harm's way. Allowing this proposal to advance will put tourism economies at risk of being destroyed; leave historic fishing livelihoods one spill away from being shut down and devastated for years; and could cause decades of living and playing along our beautiful oil-free shores to be completely swept away by a dirty, polluting industry.

In response, many New Jersey municipalities, dozens of towns on the East Coast, and hundreds of local, state and federal elected officials including the Governors of New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina, have formally opposed offshore drilling and exploration.

The Littoral Society will continue to work with state and national organizations to galvanize opposition to the federal plan. As part of that, the Society will use its annual Members Day celebration to take a contingent to the June 9 March for the Ocean in Washington, DC.

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The American Littoral Society is a member-supported, coastal conservation non-profit that promotes the study and conservation of marine life and habitat, protects the coast from harm and engages communities to do the same through work in education, advocacy, and conservation. Founded in 1961, the American Littoral Society has regional offices in New Jersey, New York and Florida. For more information, visit www.LittoralSociety.org.

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