

# NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Florida Energy Advocacy Groups Sound Off on Florida's Exclusion from Federal Five-Year Offshore Energy Plan

**JACKSONVILLE, Fla.** – Florida energy advocacy groups today gathered to discuss the omission of Florida from a proposed federal plan to conduct offshore oil and natural gas exploration between 2017 and 2022. The groups called for federal leaders to continue the momentum of recent years, in which the United States has positioned itself as an energy leader.

At a news conference hosted by the Florida Energy Forum, the Consumer Energy Alliance and Florida Vets4Energy, advocates spoke about the positive impact the energy sector can have on job creation, diversification of the state's economic portfolio, national security and consumers. Members of Energy Citizens, an energy advocacy group, attended to show support for offshore energy exploration in Florida.

Also discussed was the economic opportunity Florida loses by being omitted from the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's Draft Proposed Program, which is part of the 2017-2022 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program. While the program does suggest opening portions of the Atlantic Coast down to Georgia for offshore exploration, it omits areas with known energy resources, such as Florida's Atlantic Coast, the Eastern Gulf of Mexico, parts of Alaska and California.

A January [Harris poll](#) of 610 registered voters nationwide found that 79 percent of Americans support increased production of domestic oil and natural gas resources located in the U.S., while at least four out of five believe that additional energy production in the country could increase national security, energy security, lead to more jobs, stimulate the economy and lower energy costs. Nearly two-thirds surveyed support offshore drilling for domestic oil and natural gas resources. A 2014 [Florida survey](#) of 1,875 telephone interviews found that more Floridians support offshore energy exploration than those who don't.

*Editor's note: A video news release will follow later today*

### **Maj. Gen. William Hodgkins, USAF (Ret.), Chair, Florida Vets4Energy:**

"As a veteran, it is clear to me that the success of the United States in cutting reliance on foreign oil from unstable countries is critical to maintaining our own National Security. Expanding our own country's oil and natural gas exploration program, while continuing to develop alternative energy sources, will not only help the United States achieve energy

independence, but will also create jobs, help our economy improve, and allow us to stop the flow of U.S. dollars into the hands of regimes that do not share the interests of the United States."

**Jason Fischer, Duval County School Board member:**

"Jobs that are produced by the energy industry are a perfect example of the kind of advanced technology and manufacturing jobs that regions around America are striving to create in this country. When we work to develop the foundation for STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education in our schools, being able to develop energy industry careers for these students to pursue is important to Florida."

**David Mica, Executive Director, Florida Petroleum Council:**

"The current Administration has squandered many opportunities to create jobs, promote economic development, diversify the national economy and ensure energy security with countless policy decisions in Washington D.C. Offshore energy exploration off Florida's coasts can be done safely, securely and can be productive for our state to continue the economic gains we have had as a state during recent years. Floridians approve of seeing what resources are available off our coasts to keep America's economy growing."

**James Johns, President, Solid Rock Engineering:**

"As a small business owner who helps my clients see their design and construction vision go from paper to structure, the ability to keep construction costs down is critical. The more energy we can produce here, the more affordable the prices are for construction and the transportation of building materials. Not only is this good for my customers, but it also helps small business owners like me who rely on the construction industry for my livelihood. As our economy grows and more jobs are created in both Jacksonville and across Florida, more companies will be coming to the Sunshine State looking to build new facilities and more families will be looking for new homes. These kinds of economic opportunities not only benefit the whole state, but also engineering companies like mine."

**Kevin Doyle, Florida Executive Director for Consumer Energy Alliance:**

"American consumers have been some of the biggest winners from the energy renaissance we are experiencing. With the increased development of North American energy resources, both onshore and offshore, our country is just beginning to realize the economic and national security benefits of energy self-sufficiency. While we are encouraged by the inclusion of new areas for potential development proposed in the Atlantic off the coasts of Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia, we are disappointed that more areas were not included in the draft 5 year plan released by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. At Consumer Energy Alliance, we believe in an all-of-the-above energy strategy and expanded offshore energy development needs to be a part of the solution."

*The Florida Energy Forum is a growing community of concerned citizens committed to two goals – achieving energy security for our country and holding our elected officials more accountable in shaping energy policies.*

*The Consumer Energy Alliance is the voice of the energy consumer, providing consumers with sound, unbiased information on U.S. and global energy issues.*

*Vets4Energy is a group of volunteer veterans who continue to serve America as advocates for energy policies to sustain our national security.*

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