

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

January 24, 2019

The Honorable David Bernhardt  
Acting Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Acting Secretary Bernhardt:

On January 4, 2018, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) released the 2019-2024 National Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Leasing Draft Proposed Program (DPP), which included proposed sales for all regions of the OCS. The DPP included the waters surrounding Florida. On January 9, then-Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke met with Florida Governor Rick Scott at the Tallahassee airport, and afterwards tweeted that he was “removing Florida from the draft offshore plan.” However, on January 19, BOEM Acting Director Walter Cruickshank informed our committee that Florida was still under consideration for oil and gas drilling activities.

On March 13, 2018, then-Secretary Zinke testified before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, “Florida is still in the process.” In front of the House Natural Resources Committee two days later, he said, “My commitment is that we won't do any more oil and gas platforms off the coast of Florida. I can't make it any clearer than that.”

The path to the then-Secretary's decision to exempt Florida and the impact that decision is having on the subsequent development of the 2019-2024 OCS leasing program remain unclear. To assist the House Natural Resources Committee in carrying out its oversight responsibilities on this issue, please provide the following as soon as possible, but no later than March 1, 2019:

1. All documents and communications of employees and persons within and between the Department of the Interior and the Florida Governor's office regarding the potential and actual inclusion of waters around Florida in BOEM's Draft Proposed Program released January 4, 2018.
2. All documents and communications of employees and persons between BOEM and the Florida Governor's office after publication of the Draft Proposed Program and before the Secretary's meeting with the Governor on January 9, 2018.
3. All documents and communications of employees and persons within and between the then-Secretary's office, Deputy Secretary's Office, or Office of the Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management and the Florida Governor's office after publication of the Draft Proposed Program and before the Secretary's meeting with Governor Scott on January 9, 2018.

4. All documents and communications of employees and persons within and between BOEM and then-Secretary Zinke, the Deputy Secretary, and the Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management regarding then-Secretary Zinke's tweet on January 9 that Florida would be removed from consideration for offshore oil and gas leasing.
5. All documents and communications of employees and persons within and between BOEM and any other officials in the Department of the Interior (DOI) regarding whether or how the waters around Florida would be included in developing the next draft of the offshore leasing program.
6. Documents sufficient to show approval from the DOI Departmental Ethics Office for then-Secretary Zinke's flight to Florida, including but not limited to form DI-2000.

While we are aware that DOI is largely shut down due to the lapse in appropriations, the Department has made it clear that it believes funding exists for the offshore oil and gas program and has funded dozens of employees to continue work on administration initiatives. If BOEM can continue to work on the new and completely unnecessary offshore leasing program, it should be able to respond to the Committee's inquiries.

Please refer to the attached instructions on how to respond to this document request. As specified therein, upon completion of the document production, please submit a written certification that a diligent search has been completed and all responsive documents have been produced to the Committee. If you have any questions about this request, please contact my staff at (202) 225-6065.

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva  
Chairman  
Committee on Natural Resources



Alan S. Lowenthal  
Member of Congress