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Attorney General

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April 6, 2018

Via E-mail

Department of Interior
Attn: FOIA Office MS-7328, MIB
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240
E-mail: os_foia@ios.doi.gov

Dear FOIA Officer:

The Office of the New Jersey Attorney General submits this Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to obtain important information about the decision to remove Florida, and Florida alone, from the 2019-2024 National OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program. In January 2018, Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke proposed including the Atlantic OCS in the Leasing Program—despite significant and longstanding objections from the affected states—potentially opening waters from Maine to Florida to oil and natural gas drilling.

New Jersey, along with many of its neighboring coastal states, strongly objects to drilling off its coast, and has submitted written objections to the federal government supporting its opposition. On January 9, 2018, Secretary Zinke met with Florida Governor Rick Scott, and announced that waters off of Florida's shore would be removed from the OCS Leasing Program. To understand the Secretary's decision to remove Florida from the OCS Leasing Program, my Office seeks information about what the Secretary considered to make this decision, information about what he considered when deciding to exempt Florida but *not* the other coastal states, and any other information about the substance and circumstances of the meeting between the Secretary and Governor Scott.

Requested Records

Please promptly produce the following records:

1. All records reflecting any consultations, meetings, or other communications between Secretary Zinke and Governor Scott, or any agents, consultants, or employees of their respective offices, relating to the Secretary's decision to remove Florida from the OCS Leasing Program.
2. All records regarding any consultations, meetings, or other communications pertaining to the scheduling of the January 9, 2018 meeting between Secretary Zinke and Governor Scott.
3. All records reflecting any consultations, meetings, or other communications prior to the January 9, 2018 meeting between Secretary Zinke and Governor Scott pertaining to the agenda or planned topics of discussion for the meeting.
4. All records reflecting any consultations, meetings, or other communications following the January 9, 2018 meeting between Secretary Zinke and Governor Scott pertaining to the OCS Leasing Program.
5. All records reflecting any consultations, meetings, or other communications following the January 9, 2018 meeting between Secretary Zinke and Governor Scott pertaining to any proposed terms or agreements reached between Secretary Zinke and Governor Scott on Florida's exemption from the OCS Leasing Program.
6. All records reflecting any consultations, meetings, or other communications within the Department of Interior relating to the Secretary's decision not to yet remove any other affected state from the OCS Leasing Program.
7. Any FOIA requests submitted by any entity or citizen and responses in your possession related to: 1) the exemption of Florida from the OCS Leasing Program; or 2) the January 9, 2018 meeting between Secretary Zinke and Governor Scott.

Time Frame

The time frame for this request is January 20, 2017 to the date of your response.

Fee Waiver Request

The Office of the New Jersey Attorney General requests a waiver of document search, review, and duplication fees because "disclosure of the [requested] information is in the public interest." 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii). Disclosure "is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government," because of the substantial public interest in protection of coastal economies, resources, and ecosystems. *Id.* Disclosure also "is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester." *Id.* This Office does not have any commercial interest in the requested information; it seeks these records in its capacity as an agency

of a State whose residents could be affected by the government operations and activities in question. The Office of the New Jersey Attorney General anticipates making records obtained from this request available to the public at no cost.

If our request for a waiver is denied, the Office of the New Jersey Attorney General is willing to pay all reasonable fees incurred in responding to this request, up to \$50. If the costs of responding to this request should exceed that amount, please contact us before incurring any additional costs.

Contact Information

Please direct any response to this request to the following e-mail address: gov-info@njoag.gov. We appreciate your assistance and look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

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