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Dear Governor Nikki Haley:

I am writing to voice my strong support for expanding offshore energy exploration and development in South Carolina and other parts of the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) and continuing to develop offshore areas in the Gulf of Mexico and Alaska. It is encouraging to see that the draft five-year plan for oil and gas leasing is poised to make more of our country's ample offshore energy resources available for the benefit of our nation. If anything, a broader offshore expansion would be welcome. At a minimum, the offshore areas included in the Draft Proposed Plan should not be reduced any further.

American energy development has been central to our country's economic recovery, job growth, and improved energy security over the last several years. Sustaining this positive movement requires more access to domestic energy resources - including offshore. Reasonably expanding offshore exploration and development off the Atlantic Coast alone could:

- Create close to 280,000 new jobs - 35,000 of which would be in South Carolina.
- Add \$23.5 billion annually to the U.S. economy, and more than \$2.7 billion to South Carolina's by 2035.
- Provide more than \$51 billion in new government revenue through 2035 - nearly \$3.7 billion for South Carolina.

History has shown that offshore oil and natural gas development and other ocean users like fishermen and the military can work in the same areas. Also, in recent years, the energy industry and government have worked together to improve the safety of offshore energy development. As a result, offshore exploration and production have never been safer. With these improvements in place, we must now expand access for the benefit of South Carolina and our nation's economy and energy security. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Rocky Bensch
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Pickens, SC 29671-7957