

Office of the Governor
State of Louisiana

JOHN BEL EDWARDS
GOVERNOR



P.O. Box 94004
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70804-9004
(225) 342-7015
GOV.LA.GOV

January 3, 2022

Honorable Deb Haaland
United States Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland:

I write to you today not only on behalf of the people and businesses of the state of Louisiana, but the wider Gulf Coast region, to ask that you move forward in holding the last two lease sales in the current National OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program and with the process of developing the next 5-year leasing plan. As you know, the current leasing program expires at the end of June 2022. I believe that, should it expire, this would be detrimental not only to the economies and workers of states that support production of traditional energy sources from the Gulf OCS, but it could also significantly hamper future efforts to develop wind energy and other potential renewable sources off the Gulf Coast.

I understand the urgency of taking action to combat climate change and recognize the need to adapt our ways of using traditional carbon-heavy fuels and feedstocks while transitioning to greater capability for renewable energy to support energy needs. Having been hit by four significant hurricanes in the past two years, exacerbating the threats related to our eroding coastline, Louisiana is on the front lines of the fight against climate change. In Louisiana, we have a proud history of working collaboratively with stakeholders, including environmental groups and the energy industry, to build lasting plans to address the challenges of climate change through the development and implementation of our \$50 billion Coastal Master Plan. We have expanded on that effort by launching our own Climate Initiatives Task Force, setting ambitious goals for reducing carbon emissions to net zero by 2050.

Over the course of our efforts, we have recognized that reaching those climate goals can only be achieved through a measured transition from the energy mix we currently have to what comes next, not through unnecessary shocks to the economy and our people. Carbon management is a critical part of the effort to address climate change, and we have begun exploring means of doing that through opportunities for carbon capture and sequestration. In fact, Louisiana has approved agreements in this past year for two projects with significant capacity for carbon capture and permanent sequestration – the first two such projects ever for our state – with several more already being proposed. These represent great potential for managing and reducing our carbon footprint while we lay the groundwork for reliable and affordable renewable energy on a scale large enough to provide meaningful energy supply.

Honorable Deb Haaland
January 3, 2022
Page Two

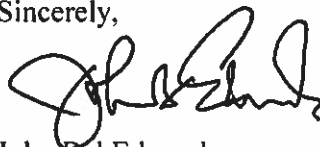
As noted in the 2018 USGS report *Federal Lands Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sequestration in the United States: Estimates for 2005–14*, the carbon emission figures tied to production from federal lands and the OCS are primarily derived from calculating emissions from industrial consumption, electricity generation and consumption for transportation – not from production. This means that there are real opportunities for carbon reduction using methods of carbon capture and sequestration, instead of just slowing Gulf production, which would be readily replaced with oil from other nations.

A financially stable offshore traditional fuels industry is also a vital resource for future development of an offshore wind economy. The infrastructure and expertise needed to build out an offshore wind energy economy will depend heavily upon leveraging the overlapping resources and skill sets currently supported by the existing offshore oil and gas industry. The offshore oil and gas industry and the infrastructure required to support it – including ports, roads, highly specialized vessels, skilled mariners and associated supply chains – are vital to the success of any domestic offshore wind or other offshore renewable energy business. The technologies and services needed to support offshore renewable projects may not be economically viable on their own. They will need the existing offshore energy economy to sustain them until fledgling industries such as offshore wind is more widespread and mature.

Thus, I do ask that the remaining lease sales on the current OCS leasing plan be allowed to go forward, and that work resumes on setting a new plan for as soon as possible after June 2022. While the overall concern is for the protection of the environment, it seems that most of the concerns raised in the U.S. Department of the Interior’s review of the leasing program deal more with financial concerns such as lease rates and financial security. I would ask that you consider pursuing those issues at the same time as the planning process for the next 5-year leasing program and perhaps even allow the two processes to inform each other as they move forward in parallel.

We look forward to working with the administration in the future to provide any help we can in finding ways to transition smoothly from the energy framework we have known to better carbon management of traditional fuels and to creating a renewable energy economy that can be cultivated to take on an ever greater share of the energy load to meet the needs of this state and the nation as a whole.

Sincerely,



John Bel Edwards
Governor

cc: Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm