

Sturk, Bruce

From: Template List <GOVERNORSUPDATE@LISTSERV.COV.VIRGINIA.GOV> on behalf of Press (GOV-Elect) <Press@GOV-ELECT.VIRGINIA.GOV>
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Subject: Governor-Elect Ralph Northam Requests Virginia Exemption from Trump Administration's Offshore Drilling Plan



Commonwealth of Virginia
Office of Governor-Elect Ralph Northam

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: January 11, 2018

Office of Governor-Elect Ralph Northam

Contact: Ofirah Yheskel

Email: Press@GOV-Elect.virginia.gov

Governor-Elect Ralph Northam Requests Virginia Exemption from Trump Administration's Offshore Drilling Plan

RICHMOND — In a letter to U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke, Governor-elect Ralph Northam today requested that Virginia be excluded from the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's plans to expand offshore drilling off of all U.S. waters. The request follows Secretary Zinke's announcement that Florida will be exempted from the plan.

"I grew up on Virginia's Eastern Shore and can tell you firsthand that the Chesapeake Bay and the Commonwealth's ocean and coastal resources are every bit as ecologically and economically valuable as those of Florida, a state that was recently exempted from the leasing plan," **Governor-elect Northam writes**. "I am encouraged by the decision to exempt Florida from the plan, and respectfully ask that the same exemption be made for the Commonwealth of Virginia."

The governor-elect also calls on the agency to allow Virginians to participate in a series of hearings that will include the Hampton Roads and Eastern Shore before the public comment period ending on March 9. Currently, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management has proposed a single public meeting to take place in Richmond, nearly 100 miles from the coastal communities that will feel the impacts of the plan most.

Governor-elect Northam [released a statement condemning the Trump administration's plan](#) earlier this month. In it, he noted the threats offshore drilling pose to Virginia's major economic drivers including tourism, fishing, aquaculture, and our military installations.