

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 28, 2013

The Honorable Sally Jewell
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Jewell,

We write to request an updated timeline for the programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for geological and geophysical activities on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf. We understand that a Record of Decision has been pushed back from fall 2013 to spring 2014.

We all agree on the need for updated seismic data to gauge potential oil and gas reserves off the Atlantic coast. As you know, it has been more than 30 years since geological and geophysical surveys were conducted in the Atlantic, and newer seismic technology provides scientists with a more accurate picture of existing resources.

In 2010, the Department indicated to Congress that the programmatic EIS would be completed in 2012. We would like to know which aspects of this process necessitate the new spring 2014 goal, whether the timeline is likely to slip again, and to what extent the timing of the Record of Decision – and the subsequent seismic testing results - will factor into development of the 2017-2022 five-year leasing plan.

As you know, energy production off the Virginia coast has garnered interest across many constituencies, and we support exploring this potential both for renewables and traditional energy sources. Accurate, up-to-date scientific data about potential offshore reserves is necessary to guide the Department's future energy development decisions. We hope to see the programmatic EIS process move forward in a timely manner while following all proper safeguards for environmental and wildlife protection.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to working with you on these important issues.

Sincerely,



Mark Warner
U.S. Senator



Tim Kaine
U.S. Senator