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DEVAL L. PATRICK
GOVERNOR

August 20, 2014

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

Re: 2017-2022 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program

Dear Secretary Jewell:

Thank you for your correspondence from June 12, 2014 notifying me that your Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) is beginning the development of a new oil and gas leasing program for the period July 2017 to June 2022 ("Five Year Program") and the publication of BOEM's *Request for Information and Comments on the Preparation of the 2017–2022 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program* ("RFI"). In response to the RFI, I am pleased to provide comments on a program that will have a direct impact on the environment and economy of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

As you know firsthand from your recent visit to the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center's Wind Technology Testing Center for the announcement of BOEM's *Proposed Sale Notice for Commercial Leasing of Wind Power on the Outer Continental Shelf offshore Massachusetts*, the Commonwealth is deeply committed to the development and implementation of nation-leading policies and strategies to cut greenhouse

gas emission and support clean energy solutions that reduce long-term energy costs, strengthen local economies, support clean technology businesses, and spur clean energy employment.

Within the context of these state and regional priorities and in consideration of many factors, some of which are articulated below, the Commonwealth strongly opposes oil and gas exploration and development in the North Atlantic region. Put simply: the search for and extraction of additional fossil fuels off our coast is inconsistent with Massachusetts and the Northeast region's policy directions, our binding commitments to greenhouse gas reductions, and our leadership role in addressing climate change.

Under the state's Global Warming Solutions Act of 2008, the Commonwealth has committed to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions by 25% by 2020 and 80% by 2050, in line with the scientific consensus on necessary reductions to avoid catastrophic climate change. Across the Northeast region, the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative has established a declining cap on carbon emissions on our power plants. And while we do recognize some near term energy supply challenges, the Commonwealth has adopted a Clean Energy and Climate Plan that will achieve its 2020 commitments and an on-going process to prepare its future energy plan for 2050.

A key part of this plan is offshore wind renewable energy. The Northeast region is well known to have some of the best offshore wind potential in the world. Since 2009, my Administration has been working closely with BOEM and participating on an intergovernmental task force (federal, state, tribal, and local elected officials) on the planning, siting, and analysis of offshore wind in two areas south of Martha's Vineyard—the Massachusetts Wind Energy Area and the Rhode Island/Massachusetts Wind Energy Area. The National Renewable Energy Laboratory estimates that these areas have the potential to generate more than 5,000 megawatts

of clean, renewable wind energy – enough electricity to power the majority of homes in Massachusetts. Our work on the planning, siting and analysis processes has included significant consultations and outreach. The Commonwealth has built on the work of BOEM's intergovernmental task force by establishing stakeholder working groups for fisheries and marine habitat issues and convening local meetings with communities and municipal officials, stakeholders, and experts. Our focus is on continuing this nation-leading work, and any potential exploration or development plans for oil and gas will present a significant distraction and curtail progress for an emerging offshore wind industry at a time when the U.S is far behind many other nations.

Finally, it is important to note that the waters of the Outer Continental Shelf off Massachusetts contain rich natural resources and important marine ecosystems and habitats that warrant strong protections. The potential impacts from oil and gas development, and the calamitous effects of spills, cannot justify the risk of moving forward with this industrial activity in the North Atlantic. The scallop and groundfish fisheries of and around Georges Bank are regarded as the most commercially important fisheries on the Atlantic coast and are critically important to the economies and social fabric of many coastal communities. The scallop fishery off Georges Bank has contributed several billion dollars to the Massachusetts and northeast regional economy in the last decade, which cannot be easily replicated or replaced. Some of these fish stocks are under great stress, experiencing declines in landings and biomass of Atlantic cod, haddock and yellowtail flounder, for example. Further impact to the fishery would be devastating to an industry which has already seen enormous cutbacks resulting from federal catch limitations intended to rebuild the fishery. These ocean waters also contain critically important habitat for endangered whales, sea turtles, and marine birds.

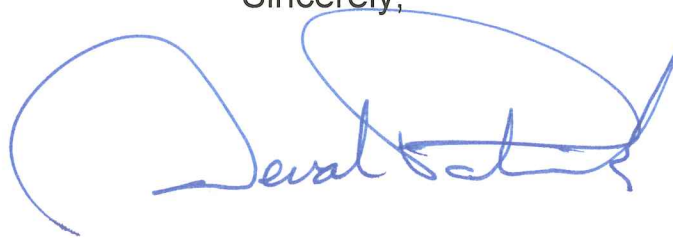
In summary, Massachusetts does not consider the exploration or extraction of oil and gas off our coast as necessary for the

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Commonwealth's, the Northeast region's, or the Nation's energy future or in the best interest of the same. Instead, we need to be focusing our energies and efforts and committing national leadership to a sustainable energy future.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sally Jewel", is written below the word "Sincerely,". The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.