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BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT

Tuesday, April 24, 2012

7:00 p.m.

Hilton Norfolk Airport
1500 North Military Highway
Norfolk, Virginia

Reported By: Marianne Martini Holmes, RPR

1 MR. BENNETT: Good evening, everyone. I'd
2 like to welcome you to this public hearing on the
3 programmatic EIS for the geological and geophysical
4 activities in the Mid-and South Atlantic.

5 My name is Jim Bennett. I am the chief of the
6 Division of Environmental Assessment for the Bureau of
7 Ocean Energy Management at Headquarters in Washington,
8 D.C.

9 Safety first. You'll notice your quickest
10 exit out of this building, out of this room in an
11 emergency will be the doors right behind you.

12 The restrooms are down the hall in the lobby
13 to the right of the elevator.

14 I want to first mention that we are the Bureau
15 of Ocean Energy Management. We are a bureau within the
16 United States Department of the Interior and we're
17 responsible for the development of resources and the
18 protection of the environment on the Outer Continental
19 Shelf.

20 We are here to hear your comments on the
21 programmatic EIS.

22 But before we get to that, I want to introduce
23 a couple of people because although we're here to hear
24 your comments, if you have any questions, any issues you
25 want to discuss with an expert, we have several people

1 here who could be of assistance.

2 First is Gary Goeke, regional assessment
3 section chief in the Gulf of Mexico region which is
4 responsible for handling this project.

5 Second is Tom Bjerstedt who's the project
6 coordinator. Those two are up on at the panel.

7 I also want to mention Cathy Rosa who's here
8 and handling the logistics. I think she's outside.

9 Tershara Matthews who is the regional
10 environmental assessment unit supervisor, also in the
11 Gulf of Mexico region, is there by the door. Also has
12 expertise in coastal zone management issues.

13 And John Filostrat is our representative from
14 the Office of Public Affairs.

15 Also, I want to mention from Continental Shelf
16 Associates who has been helping us develop this
17 Environmental Impact Statement is Will Sloger, project
18 manager -- raise your hand -- Kim Olsen, deputy project
19 manager and Robyn Schuricht who's here helping out with
20 logistics. I think she's outside.

21 With that, I am going to turn this over to Tom
22 Bjerstedt, our project manager, who's going to give you
23 a brief overview of what the EIS is and why we're
24 preparing it, and then we'll get to some comments.

25 Tom?

1 MR. BJERSTEDT: Thank you, Jim.

2 I'm the NEPA coordinator, NEPA standing for
3 National Environmental Policy Act. My job is to bring
4 the document together from within the Bureau folks who
5 review various parts of it and to work with the
6 contractor who CSA International, Incorporated are
7 located down in Stuart, Florida.

8 We contracted with them to undertake the
9 marine mammal modeling for noise in the ocean, the
10 impacts on marine mammals, much of which is reflected in
11 the document that's state of the practice kind of
12 modeling for noise and sea and what sorts of impacts
13 that causes to marine mammals and other animals in the
14 water.

15 We are in the midst of a round of public
16 meetings such as this.

17 This shows where we have been and this shows
18 where we will be before the end of the week.

19 We distributed the draft EIS for a 60-day
20 comment period. It's been distributed to anyone who has
21 been on our mailing list. If we have your email
22 address, we either send you notification of where you
23 can find it on the Web or a CD, depending on what your
24 preferences are.

25 But there it is sitting right there on the

1 corner of the dais, the table, so there's objective
2 evidence that there is a document that's actually out
3 there.

4 The Notice of Availability for the draft EIS
5 was published in the Federal Register on March 30th, and
6 that begins the 60-day comment period in the middle of
7 which we now are.

8 We're here today to record your comments
9 either in writing or in oral testimony that we have
10 today. We have a court reporter here to record and be
11 part of the administrative record.

12 And public input is an important part of the
13 National Environmental Policy Act because ultimately
14 we're at the draft stage, we put together a draft and
15 we're going to finalize it, but before we do that, we
16 receive comments from folks like yourself, from Federal
17 agencies, State agencies to help us evolve the document
18 and make it the best decision document that we can offer
19 up for the Secretary of the Interior who will use it for
20 a decision.

21 The purpose of the EIS is to evaluate and
22 assess the potential environmental impacts from
23 geological and geophysical work conducted in the
24 Mid- and South Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf.

25 Inside the document, you'll see that we

1 projected activity levels, meaning we've projected what
2 degree of interest might be in the area based on permit
3 applications that we have received from various industry
4 operators who want to conduct surveys.

5 We evaluate mitigation measures to reduce and
6 eliminate impacts on affected resources. And part of
7 the way that this EIS was put together is shown by
8 alternatives that we constructed which I'll talk about a
9 little bit later.

10 The EIS provides information to our Bureau and
11 to other agencies having responsibilities under
12 environmental law for resources that they manage to have
13 a body of knowledge about the impacts of this work
14 before permitting decisions are made.

15 This halftone here is -- shades of gray is the
16 Mid- and South Atlantic Planning Areas and the regions
17 that would be -- that have been requested to have a
18 permit to do various types of seismic surveying.

19 The darker colors show higher activity levels,
20 meaning there's maybe overlapping areas, and the lighter
21 shades of gray show lesser activity levels.

22 These are based on permit applications that we
23 have in hand. Starting at about 2009, we began to
24 receive them, but we haven't acted on them because we
25 haven't done an environmental review of what that means

1 in this area which is a frontier area.

2 The proposed action is to authorize geological
3 and geophysical activities in all of the three program
4 areas that the Bureau manages. These would be renewable
5 energy, oil and gas and marine minerals which is
6 primarily sand for onshore beach restoration and the
7 like.

8 Here shows the map of the Mid-Atlantic here,
9 here offshore Virginia, North Carolina and the
10 South Atlantic Planning Area here.

11 This dotted line shows the edge of the
12 exclusive economic zone of the United States. It
13 extends out from the shore about 200 nautical miles and
14 all of the sea and the seabed from this line inshore
15 belongs to the United States.

16 This line here, a little less distinct, is the
17 edge of what is called an Extended Continental Shelf.
18 It is a provision in the United Nation Convention on the
19 law of the sea where a nation can seek to extend the
20 limits of their exclusive economic zone further out to
21 the edge of the Extended Continental Shelf.

22 And they do this if they can meet certain
23 conditions; if the morphology, the shape of the Shelf is
24 such that they can demonstrate it should belong to the
25 country.

1 The United States has not pursued this yet,
2 but we wanted to include this area inshore of 350 miles
3 as part of this evaluation because we don't really know
4 if or when the State Department might pursue something
5 like this. So we wanted the evaluation to include it.

6 The types of activities we're talking about
7 are geological and geophysical in nature. Geological
8 would involve coring, shallow test drilling, which tends
9 to be -- or is less than 500 feet in depth below the mud
10 line.

11 Deep stratigraphic tests are also part of the
12 geological suite of activities. These are holes,
13 exploration discovery type holes for research purposes
14 that are deeper than 500 feet.

15 When you have a permit for a deep
16 stratigraphic test, you can't -- if you do find oil and
17 gas, you can't produce it because you can't produce it
18 unless you have a lease. And a permit does not give you
19 a lease. So this is not exploration; this is more a
20 research-oriented type of activity.

21 Geophysical includes two- and
22 three-dimensional seismic surveying with airguns.

23 Controlled source electromagnetic surveys are
24 techniques used by industry to determine the fluid and
25 gas content of formations at depth.

1 High-resolution geophysical surveys, they are
2 more geoengineering in nature related to whether the
3 bottom conditions that you would want to understand
4 before you would site a bottom-founded structure, be
5 that an oil and gas platform or perhaps a wind turbine
6 model pole, various techniques here.

7 Multibeam echo sounder, that tends to be used
8 to determine the bathymetry, the depth sounding,
9 sidescan sonar for determining bottom conditions or
10 whether you have obstructions like perhaps a shipwreck.

11 Gravity and magnetic surveys are also at
12 issue.

13 The two- and three-dimensional seismic, that
14 involves airguns.

15 These other techniques, so-called
16 high-resolution geophysical surveys, do not. They tend
17 not to for renewable energy and for marine minerals.
18 They might for oil and gas.

19 Impact-producing factors is a term of art in
20 the, in the NEPA world for stressors on the environment,
21 and we have two types, routine activities that we can
22 predict by the nature of the work that's proposed and
23 accidental events that are unpredictable.

24 Routine operations would be active acoustic
25 sources, seismic airgun surveying and also the

1 electromechanical techniques I was describing to you
2 earlier for geoengineering.

3 Aircraft traffic and noise, these large
4 seismic boats need survey support from onshore on
5 occasion. A helicopter will come out bringing crew
6 changes, whatnot. That is all something that's
7 happening as a result of the activity.

8 Drilling and coring involves operational waste
9 like drill cuttings that tend to be brought to the
10 surface and discharged on the sea bottom.

11 And seafloor disturbances would be any kind of
12 touching of the bottom, bottom sampling, drilling and
13 coring, discharges on the bottom, placement of anchors,
14 cables, sensors.

15 Also onshore base support types of activities.
16 I mentioned that support can happen for offshore work.
17 You have ships that need a place to berth, you have
18 ships that need to buy supplies from and you have crews
19 onshore that work offshore.

20 So you have vessel traffic, you have noise,
21 you have exclusion zones for either safety or protected
22 species and wastes that are generated from ships.

23 Trash and debris as a result of all of this
24 type of activity is a concern for any activity on the
25 ocean.

1 And for accidental events, all we're talking
2 about here are fuel spills because we're not talking
3 about oil and gas exploration, we're not talking about
4 pipelines and we're not talking about tankers. We're
5 talking about boats on the water.

6 So the type of accidental event could be
7 something happening at sea where you could spill fuel.

8 The environmental resources in the document:
9 Benthic communities, fish and fisheries, marine mammals,
10 sea turtles, coastal and marine birds and protected
11 species from any of these groups I just mentioned.

12 Socioeconomic issues would be archaeological
13 resources. The Eastern Seaboard is an area of long
14 historic human activity and there's lots of shipwrecks
15 out there.

16 Marine protected areas, these are places that
17 have been designated by law for special reasons.

18 In the North -- or the Mid-Atlantic Planning
19 Area, we have the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary and
20 in the South Atlantic Planning Area, we have Ray's Reef.

21 So these are two special places that have been
22 designated by law as marine sanctuaries.

23 Human resources and land use, I mentioned that
24 earlier.

25 Also other marine uses is the acknowledgment

1 that large tracts of the ocean surface and subsurface
2 are used by the Department of Defense for various
3 activities through our range complexes offshore
4 virtually the entire Eastern Seaboard.

5 The heart and soul of an EIS like this would
6 be the alternatives that are selected for analysis and
7 constructed for analysis.

8 What we've done is for our alternatives, we've
9 taken a look at areas that are currently under activity
10 restrictions during parts of the year that are
11 recognized by National Marine Fisheries Service for
12 vessel speed reduction.

13 I'll show you a map in a bit that shows where
14 these areas are along the coast.

15 And they recognize because of the whale
16 migrations that take place during the year, that certain
17 parts of the shoreline area should be restricted from
18 vessels going over a certain speed so that they don't --
19 they lessen the hazard of hitting a whale on the
20 surface.

21 Also, we have a suite of operating procedures
22 in the Gulf of Mexico that pertain to how a survey is
23 begun, how it's conducted and under what conditions it's
24 terminated.

25 There are a series of mitigation measures,

1 protected species observers that are required to be
2 scanning the sea surface for animals while the survey's
3 underway.

4 Could have vessel strike avoidance guidance
5 that talks about conditions under which the marine
6 mammal observers identify an animal and the conditions
7 under which the survey has to terminate.

8 And marine trash and debris awareness is
9 always a concern because certain types of trash and
10 debris could be confused with prey material or food by
11 some animals. So you need to be constantly aware of
12 what you might be putting in the water, either
13 accidentally or as a result of an accident.

14 Alternative B is an expanded version of
15 Alternative A. It takes the area restrictions that are
16 recognized under Alternative A and expands them and adds
17 additional mitigations that seem to be more protected,
18 protected measures of a different sort and perhaps a
19 greater sort, you might conclude.

20 This includes all mitigations in A that I just
21 mentioned.

22 It also includes expanding these time/area
23 closures -- and, again, I'll show you a map in a
24 minute -- and closure area for nesting sea turtles off
25 Central Florida.

1 And separation between simultaneous seismic
2 surveys, it recognizes that you don't want to have two
3 surveys at the same time, the same place or close to
4 each other.

5 And required passive acoustic monitoring, this
6 technique uses hydrophones in the water to try to detect
7 the signs of marine mammals underwater. You can see
8 them when they are at the surface, but if they are
9 underwater, this technique can hear for their various
10 singing and their creaking and noises that they make,
11 and it's a way to determine, better determine whether
12 they might be in the area if you can't see them.

13 Alternative C is a requirement for National
14 Environmental Policy Act evaluation like this. It
15 involves saying, well, if the activity doesn't happen,
16 then what occurs.

17 And in our condition, since oil and gas
18 activity has not taken place in the Atlantic for 30
19 years, 30-some years, our no action alternative for that
20 part of our program is to not make -- not allow that to
21 happen.

22 For renewable energy, for marine minerals,
23 we've established a status quo aspect for Alternative C,
24 the no action alternative, the reason being is that
25 these renewable energy authorities and marine mineral

1 activity that's currently authorized on the Atlantic
2 Coast, it's been happening for years in the case of
3 marine minerals and more recently for renewable energy.

4 So the construction of this alternative is
5 taking a look at oil and gas. It's talking about what
6 will happen if we don't let that happen, whereas seeking
7 to understand whether that's something we should have
8 happen, but for the other programs, it's not seeking to
9 curtail anything that's going on in the renewable energy
10 or marine mineral activity.

11 These are the time/area closures that I had
12 mentioned.

13 This area that might be a little hard to see
14 is hatched. It's the critical habitat for the North
15 Atlantic Right Whale. It extends off of the coastline
16 of Georgia, Jacksonville, Florida and extends down the
17 Florida coastline to the bottom or the southern end of
18 the South Atlantic Planning Area.

19 The area in orange here is what NOAA
20 recognizes as their Southeast Seasonal Management Area.
21 It's recognizing that inside this area during this
22 period of time, their regulations require that vessels
23 check their speed, go below a certain level because
24 there's whales in this area.

25 The yellow shows the Mid-Atlantic Seasonal

1 Management Areas that they recognize. This is -- these
2 are belts that extend from the shore out to 20 nautical
3 miles. That's generally the distance that these zones
4 extend from the shore. These little cusped areas are
5 off major bays that have a lot of vessel traffic
6 concentrated either going in or going out.

7 So these are the existing Seasonal Management
8 Areas recognized by NOAA.

9 What we're saying for our Alternative A is
10 that in these zones, you're not -- we would not be
11 allowing activity with airguns during the same period of
12 time NOAA is recognizing vessel speed restrictions.

13 For Alternative B that I mentioned to you,
14 there was an expanded suite of closure areas,
15 mitigation. This band south of the Southeast Seasonal
16 Management Area extends from the southern edge of it all
17 the way to the south border of the South Atlantic
18 Planning Area and extends -- fills in these areas that
19 are now open for the Mid-Atlantic Planning Area.

20 So in effect what you have is a continuous
21 belt between Delaware Bay and Cape Canaveral that would
22 have various -- during various times of the year be
23 closed for seismic airgun activity.

24 The reason, the rationale for that is simple.
25 The whales, the Northern Right, summertimes often in

1 New England states and during the summer begins to
2 migrate down shore and generally they are concentrated
3 along the shoreline. Most whale sightings are within 20
4 nautical miles.

5 So, hence, the idea that we're creating an
6 area that sets back and doesn't allow activity when
7 these -- when whales are in this area during their
8 yearly migration.

9 Off of Brevard County in Central Florida, Cape
10 Canaveral here, this is a well-established Leatherback
11 and Loggerhead sea turtle nesting area. There's tens of
12 thousands of nests that are watched and recognized on
13 shore.

14 So our area of closure during this period of
15 time for the sea turtle nesting extends 10 nautical
16 miles off the shore.

17 It's simply saying that no airgun activity
18 during the period of time that these animals are coming
19 ashore, laying their eggs and the hatchlings are coming
20 out and moving out to sea.

21 This is a chart that shows what mitigation
22 measures apply to which alternative. The time/area
23 closures for the Northern Rights. Of course, we have
24 that as is recognized under NOAA regulation. We're
25 expanding it for B.

1 The seismic survey protocols, this is the
2 ramp-up, the visual observers, startup and shutdown
3 procedures were recognized for both alternatives.

4 Passive acoustic monitoring is recommended for
5 A, but it's required for B.

6 The separation between simultaneous surveys
7 are not. It's not part of A, but it is part of B.

8 And you can see generally which mitigation
9 packages apply to which alternative.

10 Now, what you'll see in the document itself,
11 if I can direct you to one point in the EIS to take a
12 look at if you want a summary of the evaluation to be
13 done, along the left border here, you'll see all of the
14 resources that we recognize in the area, and also in the
15 actual table that's in the EIS, you'll see the impacting
16 factors that we've identified that correspond to each of
17 those resources.

18 Along the top, you'll have each alternative,
19 and then as a matrix here, you'll see these, what we
20 call significance criteria. They are qualitative
21 descriptors that are a roll-up of what we are assessing
22 to be the impact of that alternative on those resources
23 with that impacting factor that ranges from negligible,
24 goes to minor, moderate and major, and there are no
25 resources or impacting factors that cause a major impact

1 in our assessment. It's always something less, even
2 moderate, and in many cases for many types of impacting
3 factors is negligible.

4 When an Environmental Impact Statement is in
5 production, consultations with other agencies that have
6 responsibilities under various laws for the resources
7 that they watch is undertaken.

8 In our case, Section 7, consultations with
9 NOAA -- with Fish and Wildlife Service under the
10 Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act.
11 These are consultations that tend to be required and
12 that are required and if everything works well, they are
13 completed by the time the EIS is, is completed.

14 This is a schedule that shows you in a general
15 way what's happening now and will happen down the road.

16 We're right in the midst of a comment period
17 here in April and May.

18 After we have comments, we'll revise the
19 document, try to respond to them as best we can with the
20 kinds of input that we receive.

21 And then we'll begin to summarize some
22 conclusions for management to consider towards the third
23 and fourth quarter of this year.

24 I mentioned that all the environmental
25 consultations are underway at the same time that we're

1 doing this for the EIS.

2 And at the end of it all, there is a Record of
3 Decision which is a publication, a bulletin in the
4 Federal Register that reports what the conclusion of the
5 evaluation is.

6 We expect to make that by the end of the
7 calendar year.

8 I mentioned that we're in the middle of a
9 60-day comment period. It closes on May 30th.

10 We'll be taking your comments here tonight and
11 we'll be collecting written comments from you either
12 here now or later.

13 We can have comments made and emailed to a
14 dedicated email address, ggeis@boem.gov.

15 And also the literature that is being
16 distributed outside, there's packets of material that
17 show you where the website is that you can click up a
18 copy of the document and take a look at it yourself, you
19 can scroll through it.

20 If you'd like to send your comments to us by
21 US Post, there's the mailing address which is also in
22 the literature that's outside.

23 If you've picked up any of that stuff, you
24 should be able to know how to send us comments if you
25 want to do that later on.

1 In conclusion, I would say that we've spent
2 more than a year putting this draft EIS together. It
3 does involve state of the practice modeling for noise in
4 the ocean and its impact on animals.

5 It tends to be -- it's complicated, it's tough
6 to get through, but we have waded through it and have an
7 evaluation where people who are subject matter experts
8 can make sense out of it.

9 If you're going to offer us comments, we would
10 love your comments. We'd like to make the best document
11 that we can. And really the conclusions of ordinary
12 folks that are not subject matter experts go a long way
13 to helping us understand it and revise the document to
14 make it the decision document for the Secretary of the
15 Interior.

16 With that, I'm going to begin public comments.
17 Before I do that, I just want to read some
18 guidelines for fairness.

19 Our goal is to allow comments from everyone
20 who signed up to speak basically until we're done.

21 Federal and State representatives speak first.
22 They don't have any time restrictions.

23 If members of the public speak, we would ask
24 they police themselves to three minutes for comment
25 period.

1 When all who wish to speak have spoken, then
2 we can open the floor to anyone who wants to make a
3 comment.

4 We're here to receive your comments on the
5 draft document.

6 If you comment on anything else, it's not
7 going to really help the purpose for us being here.

8 Please direct your comments to the folks at
9 the front of the room, either on the panel at the dais
10 or myself rather than to the crowd at large.

11 When you have a statement to make, if you're
12 reading from notes, it's going to help the court
13 reporter a lot if you would hand the notes in so that
14 she could correlate them to what you say.

15 Be sure to come up to the microphone, speak
16 clearly so we have a good record for our -- of the
17 meeting today.

18 With these guidelines, I'll call the first
19 speaker.

20 Eileen Levandoski.

21 MS. LEVANDOSKI: Good evening. My name is
22 Eileen Levandoski, and I'm the Virginia Conservation
23 program manager with the Sierra Club and I'm also a
24 resident of Virginia Beach.

25 This seismic study is completely unnecessary

1 when it comes to supporting Virginia offshore wind
2 development. Such geological and geophysical studies
3 are already covered by the programmatic environmental
4 assessment that BOEM has already approved for the
5 Mid-Atlantic Wind Energy Areas which includes Virginia.

6 Secretary of the Interior Salazar and others
7 contend that seismic testing will not only reveal how
8 much oil and gas may be on the Outer Continental Shelf,
9 but will also benefit research for the offshore wind
10 industry.

11 However, it's really dynamite versus a hammer
12 when comparing the level of seismic study necessary for
13 oil and gas versus that for offshore wind.

14 The oil and gas industry wants to know what is
15 hundreds and thousands of feet below the seafloor. To
16 get information from that far below the ground, they use
17 extremely loud airguns. But the renewable energy
18 industry only wants to know what's on the seafloor and
19 just below it, so they use echo sounders and sub-bottom
20 profilers that are generally many orders of magnitude
21 quieter than airguns.

22 The difference is on the order is 250-plus
23 decibels for airguns versus 200 decibels for sub-bottom
24 profilers and echo sounders.

25 That's a huge gap since intensity goes up 10

1 times for every 10 decibels you gain, not to mention
2 that airguns put out broadband sound, potentially
3 affecting everything in the ocean that can hear, while
4 the sources used by the renewable industries are limited
5 to a small part of the frequency spectrum.

6 Harming our wildlife and our fishing and
7 tourism industries to explore for oil and gas is also
8 unnecessary since we don't want drilling to go forward
9 in any case.

10 Almost 2,000 Virginians participated in the
11 Hands Across the Sand to speak out against drilling off
12 our Virginia coast.

13 Our coastal environment is too precious to
14 risk with any drilling-related activity.

15 While the Gulf and its people are reeling from
16 the BP Gulf oil spill disaster, other spills have since
17 occurred off the coast of Scotland and off the coast of
18 Brazil.

19 The risk continues to be real and formidable.
20 Why even kick off the process with exploration.

21 Harmful seismic airgun studies aren't needed
22 for offshore wind development, a clean energy source we
23 can all support.

24 The Sierra Club is ready to join BOEM to help
25 power America with clean renewable energy, but we won't

1 accept offshore drilling off our Virginia coast and we
2 won't accept putting our marine life at risk with
3 seismic airguns.

4 Thank you.

5 (Applause)

6 MR. BJERSTEDT: If I could ask you -- you
7 don't need to have the applause. Just listen to the
8 folks, please.

9 Georgia Saunders.

10 MS. SAUNDERS: Good evening. My name is
11 Georgia Saunders, and I am a resident of the oceanfront
12 in Virginia Beach, and I am very concerned about and
13 very much against the proposed seismic exploration and
14 any offshore oil drilling.

15 Every day I hear from friends in the Gulf,
16 many of them from Plaquemines Parish, and they tell me
17 tales of catches of shrimp that have no eyes, deformed,
18 fish that have bleeding lesions, huge numbers of
19 dolphins with a mysterious deadly sickness that no one
20 seems to want to tie to the oil gusher and the tons of
21 toxic corexit used to disperse and hide this oil.

22 I wonder, were these damages predicted in the
23 EIS for the GOM drilling? I wonder.

24 I have also seen pictures of these people's
25 children with rashes on their body from the -- that

1 happened to go down to the beach. Now they have rashes
2 on their body, respiratory illnesses, respiratory
3 illnesses of the fishermen who went out to help with the
4 cleanup and were not allowed to use respirators. By
5 BP's order they would be, they would be fired from the
6 only source of income they had if they used a
7 respirator.

8 Why is that?

9 Did BP just not want the public to see the
10 damage that they had done to the environment?

11 Some of these fishermen now have seizures.
12 They now also have respiratory illnesses. Many of the
13 fishermen no longer have a livelihood. They cannot
14 support their families.

15 Let me ask you, is this what you have in mind
16 for Virginia? Is this what you want for Virginia, for
17 your children and for your grandchildren here?

18 Many of these people are still looking to be
19 reimbursed, and they haven't been reimbursed yet two
20 years later. They are still struggling.

21 How is it possible to reimburse such a thing
22 anyway when you have destroyed people's livelihood,
23 environment, their cultural way of life?

24 We have a beautiful cultural way of life here,
25 too.

1 At the June 2010 Congressional grilling of the
2 CEOs of the Big 5 oil companies, Representative Markey
3 of Massachusetts asked them about their plan for the
4 cleanup, and it became evident that they really didn't
5 have a plan; that they had walruses in their plan for
6 the cleanup of the Gulf of Mexico. It was funny at the
7 hearing, but it's really not very funny at all.

8 Are they -- do they still have walruses in the
9 plan for the cleanup in Virginia in case there is a
10 spill?

11 Has anything changed on the cleanup plan?
12 That's what I would like to know.

13 I feel bad for my friends in the Gulf, but up
14 until now, I've always told them, "It will never happen
15 here in Virginia because I believe that we love our
16 coastal waters too much to risk them."

17 I'm asking the people of Virginia to lead the
18 way in refusing to put fat corporate profits ahead of
19 the environment that we're going to leave our children
20 and our grandchildren here and our beautiful coastal
21 waters.

22 And that's all I have to say to you this
23 evening.

24 Thank you.

25 (Applause)

1 MR. BJERSTEDT: Al Quartararo.

2 MR. QUARTARARO: Good evening. My name is Al
3 Quartararo. I'm a retired naval officer and spent a lot
4 of time, the majority of the last ten years that I was
5 in the Navy, working environmental issues for afloat
6 programs.

7 Unlike a lot of you speakers, I take a
8 different perspective. I'm going to stick to the point,
9 and that being, the EIS for conducting the exploration
10 soundings on the ocean floor.

11 And I absolutely urge the Bureau to move ahead
12 with that, use the sciences that are available, use the
13 most stringent requirements that you have to apply to
14 whoever it is that's doing this sound echo testing and
15 make sure that they comply with all the laws and
16 requirements, apply the same standards to American
17 companies, American exploration of mining that our
18 President applied to the Brazilian companies that are
19 doing deepwater drilling over mile deep in the -- off
20 the coast of Brazil.

21 In that endeavor, the American Government
22 promised to provide them \$2 billion of Department of
23 Defense funding in order for them to explore oil off
24 their Continental Shelf but prohibit the exploration of
25 our own resources safely off of our own

1 Continental Shelf.

2 While the President closed down the Gulf of
3 Mexico to future mining, he -- the Chinese in
4 collaboration with the Cubans are going to mine down in
5 the Gulf of Mexico.

6 I know, that oil won't affect Florida or the
7 Gulf Coast; only Cuba.

8 It's time that we get off of the bandwagon of
9 no to all of the above and that we can only have it one
10 way.

11 We have to find a way to find an independence
12 from energy from foreign sources that at a political
13 whim changes our ability to heat our homes, to run our
14 factories, to provide an income and prosperity for
15 America.

16 If all the things that were done in the
17 alternative arena today and proved to be successful,
18 they wouldn't be marketable for another 25 years.

19 If all the wind that people say is out there
20 was explored and we exploited it, we would not have
21 generating electricity from off the Atlantic for another
22 15 years.

23 What's the alternative that we are leaving to
24 our children and our grandchildren?

25 The people that are against this, they

1 certainly fill their cars with oil. They certainly plug
2 their electric cars into sockets that use oil-fired
3 generation.

4 There has to be a better way than just saying
5 no, but we also have to hold corporations and the
6 regulatory agencies that oversee this type of endeavor
7 responsible and accountable for what they do off our
8 coastal shores.

9 Thank you.

10 (Applause)

11 MR. BJERSTEDT: Hannah Wiegard.

12 MS. WIEGARD: Good evening. My name is Hannah
13 Wiegard.

14 I thank this agency for the time and effort
15 that you have all applied to this matter.

16 I am a member of the field staff of the
17 Chesapeake Climate Action Network.

18 The regional climate protection organization
19 that I'm representing opposes drilling and also opposes
20 any steps that lead in the direction of expanded
21 drilling, so my comments are germane to this matter.

22 And we feel this way for a few simple reasons.

23 Drilling only prolongs and expands our
24 dependence on fossil fuels which is environmentally
25 threatening Hampton Roads twice, both with the threat of

1 oil leaks and with the threat of impacts of climate
2 change, sea level rise and extreme weather events.

3 If the Administration takes the steps of
4 opening our coast to drill for any oil or gas discovered
5 through offshore seismic testing, the entire \$23 billion
6 in coastal tourism and recreational industries would be
7 jeopardized.

8 Energy experts say that there's no credible
9 link between domestic drilling and gas prices,
10 describing it as naive to think that lifting a
11 moratorium would have better than a negligible impact of
12 a cent or two per gallon at the pump.

13 High oil prices today are a global phenomenon.
14 The global balance of supply and demand would not change
15 this greatly.

16 Continued dependence on fossil fuels has
17 consequences for the climate. We are loading the dice
18 and painting higher numbers on them with regard to
19 stronger storms, and we should expect more severe
20 hurricanes like Isabel, the most damaging hurricane to
21 hit the area in decades.

22 The storm surge, winds and heavy rains and
23 flooding killed 10 people in Virginia in Hurricane
24 Isabel and caused \$1.85 billion in damages in the State
25 and spawned a tornado in the waterfront Ocean View

1 district of Norfolk.

2 Oil drilling risks local livelihoods and plays
3 into a way of thinking that keeps us addicted to
4 greenhouse gas-intensive fossil fuels, benefiting Big
5 Oil but not Virginia.

6 Offshore wind power, however, will not harm
7 our climate or coastline or endanger fishing or tourism
8 and should be developed without delay.

9 It is my understanding that Alternative C is
10 most in line with this path, and I understand that my
11 organization and our membership will submit additional
12 comments before the close of the period.

13 Thank you.

14 (Applause)

15 MR. BJERSTEDT: Jane Bloodworth Rowe.

16 MS. ROWE: I'm a resident of Virginia Beach,
17 and I'll be very brief. I just want to underscore what
18 the first segment speaker had said.

19 And, also, I have not heard so far a lot of
20 discussion about the impact, potential impact of seismic
21 testing on commercial fishing and recreational fishing.
22 And there's some sources that say it's just not
23 compatible with the tourism industry, and I haven't
24 heard that discussed so far.

25 I do understand some people in New Jersey are

1 very opposed to it because of the obvious impact, their
2 obvious dependence on tourism on the Jersey Shore where
3 we -- you know, I don't see drilling off Virginia
4 without having also an impact on New Jersey. It's not
5 that far. So it's a little unfair to them, I think,
6 when they are trying to prevent it in their own
7 territory.

8 You know, I also understand, all the sources
9 that I've read indicate that there is, at best, a very,
10 very minimal amount of oil out there. As the previous
11 speaker said, it will not have an impact on world oil
12 prices.

13 It, at best, might be, you know, maybe a
14 minimum, maybe a day or two world supply. I just don't
15 see that being worth the risk.

16 I think we, at best, as progressive countries
17 have done, should put our resources into wind or other
18 renewable sources of energy.

19 Thank you.

20 (Applause)

21 MR. BJERSTEDT: Laura Wilson.

22 MS. WILSON: Hi. My name is Laura Wilson. I
23 am a graduate student at Johns Hopkins in the
24 Environmental Science Program, and I have lived in
25 Norfolk for the last three years.

1 I am extremely worried about the effects of
2 seismic exploration with airguns in our marine
3 environment and especially on marine mammals such as
4 whales and dolphins.

5 This exploration is estimated to injure around
6 138,500 marine mammals, and it can mask whale calls over
7 thousands of miles, destroying their ability to
8 communicate and breed, and up close, it can cause
9 hearing loss, injury and death to these whales.

10 Furthermore, I don't support any steps that
11 bring us closer to drilling offshore. It is risky, and
12 we all remember the huge oil spill in the Gulf of
13 Mexico. We're still reeling from the effects of that.
14 And we all remember the photos of the wildlife dripping
15 in oil. Thousands of animals were killed. And the
16 White House Energy Adviser, Carol Browner, actually
17 called it the worst environmental disaster the US has
18 ever faced. So why even set this into motion.

19 Thank you.

20 (Applause)

21 MR. BJERSTEDT: Matt Bedford.

22 MR. BEDFORD: Good evening. My name is Matt
23 Bedford. I'm a local here, born and raised for 43
24 years.

25 I have an ecotourism business here in

1 Virginia Beach. I spent a good part of my life
2 exploring the Mid-Atlantic region, paddle surfing, doing
3 stuff, anything you can do outside.

4 And if you take that Mid-Atlantic region on
5 your map and you look at it, it goes down from, from
6 Maryland all the way down through the Outer Banks of
7 North Carolina.

8 With the exception of the Hampton Roads, that
9 area is probably the most pristine area that we have on
10 the East Coast. It's a huge, massive area that's
11 undeveloped and absolutely just incredibly beautiful.

12 So, you know, I might have a different opinion
13 on the oil. We all have to have it. You know,
14 everybody wants to move towards renewables.

15 And I think that the fact of the matter is
16 that probably we'd be a lot further along -- if the
17 companies that propose to move us in that direction had
18 really put the money into those endeavors, I think we
19 would be there by now.

20 But that's another point.

21 The bottom line is it's an incredibly
22 beautiful area.

23 And when you look at what happened in the
24 Gulf -- and one of my good friends, colleagues in
25 college who's an environmental consultant was telling me

1 about the damage -- it's just unbelievable how affected
2 the industry, the tourism industry, the fishing
3 industry.

4 And I just can't imagine if that happened
5 here. It would be pretty devastating.

6 It affects me personally for my livelihood. I
7 take people out to see bottlenose dolphins. I have been
8 doing that for 17 years. We use hydrophones. People
9 can listen to them underwater.

10 And most humans don't spend a lot of time
11 underwater. I happen to spend a lot of time listening
12 underwater because that's what I do for a living. I
13 take people out to do this.

14 So when you see a boat coming way down the
15 coast, if you have a real simple hydrophone that you
16 spend \$200 on, people are blown away by how loud it
17 actually is.

18 So when you're talking about the activity
19 these gentlemen are talking about, this is on the orders
20 of magnitude many times that. You wouldn't even be able
21 to put the hydrophone in the water.

22 And, of course, they are talking further out
23 in the Continental Shelf which is where the migrates --
24 you know, the whales tend to use those corridors to
25 migrate.

1 So I won't babble on too much further.

2 But somebody being here, growing up here,
3 appreciating what we have, when you look at BP's just
4 absolutely horrific, unbelievable, unbelievable lack of
5 responsibility in, you know, allowing it to happen in
6 the first place and then the way they handled it is
7 just -- I cannot even fathom giving another company a
8 chance to do that off the coast of our waters.

9 Thank you very much.

10 (Applause)

11 MR. BJERSTEDT: Thank you.

12 Peggy Robin?

13 MS. ROBIN: My name is Peggy Robin, and I just
14 want to say I am opposed to the offshore exploration.

15 I feel that it is sad that we continue to
16 stress coal, oil and gas exploration.

17 You know, where is our ingenuity, our
18 creativity, our science? Why are we so far behind many
19 countries in the world today?

20 Germany has very good solar energy, a gray
21 country. They don't even have much sun.

22 Here we are stressing the old things instead
23 of trying and doing and getting new renewable energy.

24 Thank you.

25 (Applause)

1 MR. BJERSTEDT: Franklin Lundy.

2 MR. LUNDY: Thank you. Franklin Grant Lundy.

3 I spent 18 years in the Air Force. I moved
4 here to stay here because I like it here. It's
5 beautiful.

6 MR. BJERSTEDT: Come closer to the microphone.

7 MR. LUNDY: I stayed here because I like it
8 here. It's clean. It's beautiful. We don't have any
9 brown haze on the horizon except in the summertime when
10 we have the shipping corridor running.

11 And what I find interesting -- and I'm going
12 to digress here for a minute -- is we didn't even
13 discuss the smog that every one of these
14 diesel-propelled vessels would generate. Every
15 platform, if we reach that point, has diesel engines.
16 We didn't even discuss that.

17 But, anyway, again, I spent 18 years in the
18 U.S. Air Force as an officer. I'm an anesthetist.
19 Science is my playground. I play in science. I work in
20 science. I work in physiology and biology every day.
21 And I'm here to tell you that it's not an absolute. It
22 goes wrong. I see it go wrong often.

23 The most recent information published by the
24 US Energy Administration that I could find on the
25 Internet that's public record is from 1996. It says

1 we've got 7 trillion barrels of oil off of our coast. I
2 have to believe that. That's all I can find. That's
3 public record.

4 The other information I find, which is
5 interesting, is that today the US consumes
6 20 billion barrels of oil a day. Do the math -- 18
7 billion.

8 Hey, sir, I can give you, I can give you where
9 I got my citation. This is from the US Energy
10 Information Administration, yes, sir.

11 So we're consuming 18 billion barrels a day.
12 If you do the math, it's about one year of oil that we
13 have offshore.

14 Now, my grandmother taught me to save money
15 for a rainy day.

16 That oil off our coast, to me, sounds like a
17 piggy bank that, yeah, we need to know some oil's there.

18 We know it's there, but let's use the oil
19 that's more accessible and cheaper to get to that's not
20 going to have the impact on our environment that we're
21 going to have with this mess.

22 Do I want to see haze when I'm out
23 paddle-boarding or surfing or fishing? No.

24 I'm on the ocean today. I'm on the ocean four
25 days a week.

1 "As of March 2009, crude oil imports abruptly
2 began and continue to fall. Meanwhile, the US is
3 exporting an all-time high amount of oil at the range of
4 1.5 to 2 billion barrels per day."

5 And, sir, again, this is the published from
6 the US Energy Administration.

7 MR. QUARTARARO: Are you talking to me?

8 MR. LUNDY: Yes.

9 MR. QUARTARARO: That's the Board.

10 MR. BENNETT: Excuse me, please address your
11 comments up here.

12 MR. LUNDY: Yes, sir.

13 If we need oil, if we need one year of oil so
14 badly, why are we exporting oil today? Why? I want to
15 know. Why?

16 Last, when I came in this evening, I met a
17 pleasant young man with American Fuels. He told me he's
18 an econ grad. I'm proud of him. He's got a good
19 education.

20 As discussed with him, according to US --
21 according to Oil and Gas News -- again, this is an oil
22 and gas industry source, Oil and Gas News. I'm not
23 going to "Hug Obama." I'm going to Oil and Gas News --
24 there is an increasing shortage of labor with the proper
25 skillset, as they put it, to do the jobs that the

1 industry needs.

2 In other words, we don't have enough qualified
3 men and women to meet the needs of the industry already
4 with domestic oil production where we're at, okay?

5 Remember Econ 101 for you guys that have this?

6 Consequently, foreign labor pools are being
7 tapped. We did this in health care. We recruited
8 doctors. As a military practitioner, we brought in
9 doctors and nurses from foreign countries to fill the
10 void because we couldn't get them here.

11 As the young economist can tell you, the
12 market will find a cheap substitute. That's a basic
13 econ principle. That's Adam Smith, I believe.

14 Europeans, Asians and Latin-Americans meet
15 that need.

16 In closing, I just want to say thank you for
17 letting me get up here.

18 And I'd like to say that, you know, I'm proud
19 my grandparents who taught me how to save a little
20 money, and I would hope that our country can continue to
21 save this valuable resource, because as everybody seems
22 to recognize, it's well-published in the industry, oil
23 production is falling globally.

24 Yeah, there are some big pools out there, but
25 the overall volume of oil out there in the world is

1 falling.

2 Well understood again. Oil industry reports
3 are out there.

4 Why do we want to go ahead and take one year
5 of oil off our coast and burn it.

6 Thank you.

7 (Applause)

8 MR. BJERSTEDT: Raven Hayut.

9 MS. HAYUT: Hi. My name is Raven Hayut and I
10 am 10 years old, and I care about the future of our
11 marine animals.

12 First I want to say I don't want drilling in
13 the ocean for oil. I say "wind is the way, oil stay
14 away."

15 I might be young, but my future's important to
16 me and so is the animals on land and at sea that I share
17 my future with.

18 This testing that might happen scares me and I
19 have read and seen what could be -- what could happen to
20 whales and dolphins and turtles and fish and any other
21 innocent marine animal that might be around, like the
22 dolphins in Louisiana that turned up dead on the beach
23 after testing started there. The sounds that these
24 machines make is really, really, really loud and can
25 make whales and other animals go deaf.

1 MR. BJERSTEDT: Eva, I think it's Winters.

2 MS. WINTERS: Yes, sir.

3 Hi. My name is Eva Winters, and I want to
4 thank you for listening.

5 I'm a resident of Hampton, and I have lived
6 there for 25, 30 years. I was born in Norfolk. I've
7 always been around the water, and I love it.

8 I've been to Cape Hatteras, and I love that,
9 too.

10 I do not want to see oil drilled off the
11 coast. I am very concerned.

12 And I am also a fisherwoman and a very avid
13 deep sea fisherwoman, and I'm very concerned with the
14 marine life.

15 Please don't allow this.

16 Thank you.

17 (Applause)

18 MR. BJERSTEDT: Susan Shaw.

19 MS. SHAW: Hi. My name is Susan Shaw. I'm
20 with Occupy Virginia Beach.

21 I have lived in Tidewater for 30 years. I now
22 live in Virginia Beach and I work in Chesapeake for the
23 City of Chesapeake. I work as a mental health case
24 manager.

25 And, you know, my first thought about all this

1 is this all just appears delusional.

2 You know, regarding the BP disaster, you know,
3 they say one definition of insanity is when you just
4 pursue the same actions over and over and you expect to
5 get different results.

6 And I just don't understand how this
7 government agency can expect the people here to look at
8 this any other way.

9 I really want to say no to oil and gas
10 drilling.

11 You know, I want to point out that our ocean
12 here and the Chesapeake Bay is already not healthy.
13 It's, it's -- since I moved here in 1982, it hasn't been
14 healthy. You know, it's kind of had its ups and down.
15 But I don't want to take any more chances with messing
16 it up and making it worse.

17 You know, we've talked about all the marine
18 life.

19 I don't know if anybody mentioned, but one of
20 the materials that Sierra Club puts out has said that
21 there are only 400 of the Right Whales left in the
22 world.

23 And so I'm sorry, just closing part of the
24 coast here and there for certain time periods so they
25 can mate or have, you know, put their eggs or whatever,

1 that's not enough. I mean, that's -- for 400? There's
2 only 400 of them left. That's not enough protection, in
3 my mind.

4 You know, I also understand that, you know,
5 there really are risks to our commercial fisher --
6 fishermen, fisherwomen jobs and our tourism jobs.

7 I just want to read something real quick. It
8 says here, "Airguns have been shown to displace
9 commercial species on a vast scale over thousands of
10 square kilometers. The result has been to dramatically
11 depress catch rates of species such as cod, haddock and
12 rockfish. Commercial and recreational fishing off the
13 Atlantic from Maryland south generates 11.8 billion
14 annually and support 222,000 jobs. Fishermen in some
15 parts of the world where seismic testing is already
16 occurring are seeking industry compensation for their
17 losses," and it says here, "And if the Administration
18 takes the next step by opening the coast to oil and gas
19 drilling, the entire 23 billion coastal tourism industry
20 and recreational industries are at risk."

21 And I just want to say, you know, we have been
22 supporting and subsidizing the oil and gas corporate
23 powers for decades.

24 And, you know, these resources, along with
25 coal, are finite.

1 We are past peak oil.

2 I am outraged at continued corporate welfare
3 in the realm of energy. I just, I just can't believe
4 that this is still the way.

5 I feel like -- we had another speaker speak to
6 the point, you know, it's just ironic that we are just
7 going with the old way.

8 Well, we're going with the old way with the
9 people that have the power, you know, these corporations
10 that just kind of run the show, you know, in the energy
11 realm, in the political realm, in our government,
12 everywhere.

13 And I've heard that China is the leader in
14 wind power. And I find that to be very ironic.

15 You know, the previous speaker also used the
16 word "ingenuity."

17 You know, we've always been taught that that's
18 who we are in the United States, the people with
19 ingenuity and creativity.

20 You know, I just think it's incredibly ironic
21 and ridiculous that we do not mobilize wind and other
22 sources of renewable energy.

23 I also want to point out as a footnote that I
24 do not consider nuclear power to be a renewable energy,
25 just to be clear on that.

1 But I just think it's time, you know. We
2 could have done this back in the Forties, you know.
3 If we had been giving -- somebody was complaining about
4 how long it would take us to develop solar and wind and
5 other renewables.

6 Well, excuse me, if we had been pouring money
7 into resources and energy to those realms like we have
8 been, you know, to the traditional oil and gas and coal,
9 you know, it would be a whole different world, and
10 that's what I want.

11 Thanks.

12 (Applause)

13 MR. BJERSTEDT: Elizabeth Lewis.

14 MS. LEWIS: Good evening. My name is
15 Elizabeth Lewis, and I really have been deeply affected
16 by this.

17 I am a resident of Maryland, and then I've
18 also started moving -- moved over here because my
19 grandfather has cancer. So I've been here for the last
20 six months.

21 But I was always a resident of the
22 Eastern Shore of Maryland, like Tilghman Island and
23 Easton.

24 I have watched the decline with fish kills.
25 My husband's family was the Lewises with the

1 first skipjacks and all of the canning and industry with
2 fisheries over there.

3 We have watched the Chesapeake Bay.

4 I got involved with this 20 years ago and
5 started working with Senator Barbara Mikulski on the
6 Save the Bay campaign because they lost their
7 livelihood. They've lost their homes over in Delaware,
8 the Tilghman Island area.

9 This brings me to tears almost.

10 I don't want the oil drilling. I don't want
11 the seismic.

12 We've worked too hard.

13 We've poured how much money into the Save the
14 Bay campaign?

15 I mean, if you're going to put that much money
16 into it, we need to really think about what we're going
17 to do when we're going to drill because it's going to
18 be -- the cleanup, as they are saying in the BP mess, is
19 ungodly.

20 And here you have "Virginia Second in the
21 Nation in Water Pollution."

22 Let me read you a little bit.

23 "1.1 million pounds of toxic chemicals were dumped into
24 the James River," which my grandfather has lived on for
25 24 years. He now has liver cancer. You know, he drank

1 well water.

2 My mother drank the well water in Maryland.

3 She has lupus.

4 It's causatively connected, by Johns Hopkins,
5 which is the pinnacle of medicine in the state and in
6 the world.

7 You also have my father developed sarcoidosis,
8 which was Exxon contaminants which is the largest suit
9 in Maryland right now up in Harford County.

10 So, I mean, if you put any more pollutants in
11 our water -- Maryland comes downstream to Virginia.
12 You've got the D-minus rating that just came out. This
13 article is dated March 23rd, 2012.

14 Like I said, keep reading from this, it says,
15 "Richmond, Virginia." This is from your Register
16 newspaper, "More toxic chemicals were dumped into
17 Virginia waterways in 2010 than nearly any other state
18 according to a new report from Environment Virginia.
19 18 million pounds of toxic chemicals were released into
20 Commonwealth lakes, rivers and streams, according to a
21 release issued by the environmental group. That makes
22 Virginia second to only Indiana in the nation in terms
23 of water pollution. The numbers were compiled using
24 data on chemical releases reported to the Environmental
25 Protection Agency. The study found that

1 1.1 million pounds of pollution were released into the
2 James River alone," which dumps into your oceans here.
3 'The James river is vital to the history and culture of
4 Richmond and Virginia,' Environment Virginia Associate
5 Caroline Kory is quoted as saying in the release. 'We
6 shouldn't be tarnishing our legacy with toxic
7 pollution.'"

8 Again, you're going to add Big Oil to that,
9 and that's a big problem.

10 My parents moved from Maryland to escape down
11 to the Gulf a couple years ago.

12 I've walked those beaches in the last year or
13 so. And let me tell you, the dolphins died. I've seen
14 tarballs come up there. I've watched their industry
15 die. I've seen the rashes on the kids down in Ft. Myers
16 even.

17 What are you really going to do to Virginia?

18 So lest we have not learned something from
19 that, you will have the same here and causatively you
20 will pay for like BP.

21 I don't even think the settlement for BP was
22 fair because you have people losing their livelihood.
23 And, like I said, I'm taking my grandfather to cancer
24 treatments. He drank the well water for 24 years here.
25 My mom has lupus, my father has sarcoidosis.

1 And all I'm asking is think about that. Think
2 about your children, if nothing else.

3 Thank you.

4 (Applause)

5 MR. BJERSTEDT: Jeanne Olson.

6 MS. OLSON: Hi. My name is Jeanne Olson. I
7 am a daughter of a naval officer who -- I was at the
8 Pentagon the whole time I was young, and I am married to
9 a Navy veteran who still works at Oceana.

10 I spent most of my life in Northern Virginia,
11 moved down here eight years ago.

12 I have the same point that Susan brought up
13 about the problems that the poor Chesapeake Bay has had.
14 I mean, it has been -- we have spent so much time and
15 money just trying to get the Chesapeake Bay to come back
16 up to where it's, it's -- it can provide the
17 recreational and the industries that it used to provide.

18 I read a study that this year finally the
19 blue crab population has tripled since the regulations
20 have been in place in 2008, and it is the highest there,
21 the highest level since 1993.

22 That shows you how long it has taken to get
23 the -- I mean, we've been working on the Bay for a long
24 time, and finally it's starting to pay off. Finally
25 we're seeing some of that species come back, that

1 species that made the Bay the Bay. I mean, you know,
2 it's known all over the world for the blue crab, and
3 finally it's starting to come back.

4 My other point is that -- and those -- they
5 are all part of this, this environment. I mean, you
6 know, the ocean comes right into the Bay.

7 And the other point is that if we had been,
8 again, as Susan said, if we had been putting all the
9 money that companies put into oil exploration -- it's a
10 finite resource. You use it, and it's gone.

11 Wind and sun are forever. Put that money into
12 wind and sun.

13 Look -- I'm sorry, I don't know the names of
14 these two scientists, but two scientists in Australia
15 have been working with the German scientists, and they
16 just came out with a new design for solar panels that
17 you can put on your roof and that many people in Germany
18 and Australia are doing that, and these panels up the
19 amount of energy produced by 40 percent.

20 And if they can do that, why aren't we? Why
21 isn't the United States doing that?

22 We're not the dummies of the universe, you
23 know. We have smart people here, too.

24 Why aren't we putting our resources into
25 renewable resources and not polluting our -- this

1 beautiful planet that we have been given.

2 Thank you.

3 (Applause)

4 MR. BJERSTEDT: Susan, I hope it's Mariner.

5 MS. MARINER: Hi there. My family and I have
6 lived in Virginia Beach or in Hampton Roads area, my
7 husband for all his life and me for about the past 25
8 years.

9 I am here today to voice my opposition to, not
10 only to oil drilling but to seismic exploration in the
11 manner that you have laid out today.

12 Many of the things that I wanted to speak
13 about have already been touched on, so I'll just tag a
14 little bit more onto what folks have said in terms of
15 populations already. Oysters we have already seen
16 disseminated due to pollution in the Chesapeake Bay.

17 My parents live on the Eastern Shore. They
18 are just now beginning to see some of their oysters
19 returning.

20 That's an industry that has been largely
21 demolished, so we need to be very, very cautious about
22 anything we do in the water that could impact the water.

23 I'm surprised, actually, that nobody has
24 brought up that the DOD has made clear that they do not
25 want to see offshore drilling here. And, of course, our

1 economy's so dependent on the DOD and defense and so
2 many people that live in this area have served in -- do
3 serve. And my husband is one of those individuals. The
4 fact that they say that drilling is incompatible with
5 their operations, I find it to be absolutely phenomenal
6 that we even have to have a discussion about this. It's
7 beyond crazy to me.

8 I hope that you will go and have -- in the
9 area of Wallops Island -- and have another one of these
10 hearings.

11 You may or may not be aware that they have
12 begun bringing a lot of high tech jobs to the northern
13 part of the Eastern Shore in the Wallops Island area,
14 that there's been an investing of many millions of
15 dollars, and they have spoken out again against
16 drilling.

17 So I want to tell you that my brother had a
18 very small fleet of shrimp boats in Louisiana up until
19 the time -- well, up until the Gulf oil spill, and his
20 business was destroyed.

21 He now actually is working with his wife's
22 business, because the economy down there is so
23 destroyed, doing nails, if you can imagine such a thing.
24 So his life has really been destroyed through this.

25 We're talking about the possibility of doing

1 things that are much less, you know, dangerous.

2 I just saw today that India turned on a 5,000
3 acre solar farm very recently that will generate enough
4 power to run a mid-size city.

5 So this is very possible. It's really
6 exciting. And these are things that we can do that will
7 not cause these types of dangers to our way of life, to
8 the Defense Department, to the defense of our country.

9 And I guess I'd just like to bring up one
10 final point, that I went and I spoke to my son who's
11 nine years old before I was leaving, talking about how I
12 was going to speak out against, specifically against the
13 seismic exploration, and I told him a little bit more
14 about it and how -- here's a little statistic about the
15 Administration estimates that seismic exploration would
16 injure up to 138,500 marine animals -- and I pointed out
17 to him, you know, that the dolphins that we see off of
18 our coast every time we go to the beach, that those, you
19 know, those dolphins will be in jeopardy from this
20 process.

21 And he said to me, "Mom, aren't, aren't
22 dolphins our friends? You told me about the times
23 that --" I've read him stories, documented cases of
24 dolphins actually saving the lives, risking their own
25 lives to save human beings who have fallen into the

1 water. This is -- these are true stories.

2 These dolphins have risked their own lives to
3 try to keep sharks away from human beings, circling,
4 using their, their tails and their fins to ward off
5 sharks.

6 I mean, these, these are, to my knowledge,
7 this is the only creature that we have not domesticated
8 to do so that will actually risk their lives for ours,
9 and I think that matters a lot.

10 So I think that we should -- we not only need
11 to think really carefully about everything we do in the
12 water, but we also need to, to take care of the one
13 really, really good wild friend that we have.

14 So thank you very much.

15 (Applause)

16 MR. BJERSTEDT: Scott Brelin.

17 MR. BRELIN: Good evening. My name Scott
18 Brelin. I've been a Hampton Roads resident for 27
19 years.

20 And with regard to tonight's presentation, it
21 seems a lot of tonight's speakers seem to favor
22 Alternative C, the do nothing alternative.

23 This is not an option. It's basically what
24 we've been doing for too many years, and it's done
25 nothing to get us off of foreign oil. All it does is

1 continue to support countries that would just as soon
2 seen us blown off the face of the earth.

3 I hate pollution as much as anybody, but if we
4 don't find oil or some source of energy from within our
5 borders, all we will do is continue to get it from these
6 same countries that hate us.

7 Is this what we need?

8 We've heard a lot of arguments in favor of
9 renewable energy, and there's a case to be made for it.

10 But until we get there, we better start
11 thinking about American oil, coal, nuclear until such
12 time as we, as we get to renewable energy.

13 We have one scientist that says start
14 drilling, we have another scientist that says use
15 renewable energy.

16 Why can't we do both?

17 What we need is American energy.

18 Thank you very much.

19 (Applause)

20 MR. BJERSTEDT: That's the end of the list of
21 folks who have signed up to speak.

22 If there's anyone who would like to make a
23 statement now that we're finished with the appointments,
24 come forward to the mike.

25 MS. SAUNDERS: Georgia Saunders, and I would

1 just like to say one more thing.

2 The reason I think that we don't try to get
3 energy from renewable sources, the green energy, is
4 because it doesn't stand to make a very few
5 international companies and their CEO's filthy rich.

6 That's all I have to say. Thank you.

7 (Applause)

8 MS. MELGALLY: Good evening, and thank you.
9 My name is Melody Melsgally, and I'm an American also.

10 I live on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. I've
11 lived there for 17 years. And like other residents of
12 the Shore, I value and appreciate the unique and
13 pristine area. We value our aquiculture, our
14 agriculture, our clean air, water and natural beauty.

15 I'm not in favor of pollution.

16 Some this evening have pointed out that the
17 water in the Chesapeake is not healthy, while others
18 have said the crabs and the oysters are on the rebound.

19 I'm glad that the water is getting better.

20 I'm from New Orleans originally. I've seen
21 firsthand the impact the oil industry can have on an
22 area.

23 You see, my dad worked on the oil rigs. When
24 I was growing up, I saw firsthand and experienced
25 firsthand it kept food on the table, it kept the rent

1 paid and it kept the lights on. It provided jobs, much
2 needed jobs. It allowed families to have a better life.
3 It also adds numerous other jobs and services to the
4 area that support the economy.

5 When we keep these dollars in the
6 United States, it allows us to help move forward in
7 producing clean energy.

8 I spoke with a charter fishermen shortly after
9 the BP oil spill in Mississippi. At that time he had
10 lost his livelihood. And I asked him if he was in favor
11 of the moratorium. His response to me was, "Ma'am,
12 absolutely not."

13 He was my age. I grew up on the beaches in
14 Mississippi.

15 And he said, "To take this industry away from
16 us is a double whammy." He knew the fish would come
17 back.

18 Accidents happen. There's no utopia.

19 We all want clean air. We all want clean
20 water. It's possible to have both, to be good stewards.

21 To make companies abide by the laws that they
22 are supposed to follow and be responsible, I'm in favor
23 of that.

24 I am also in favor of moving forward with this
25 exploration.

1 Thank you very much.

2 (Applause)

3 MR. BJERSTEDT: Is there anyone else who would
4 like to make a comment?

5 MS. ROMANO: I would.

6 My name is Sandra Romano, and I'm a teacher in
7 the Virginia Beach City Public Schools. I teach second
8 grade.

9 Raven, you moved my heart. If I ever have a
10 student like you that would come up here and speak, then
11 I've done my job well.

12 Two things I want to tell you. Learn.
13 History repeats itself. We must learn from our past and
14 make an environmentally conscious change for our future.

15 My heart beats for you. Wind and sun are
16 forever and you are our future, and I want you to have
17 something like we have today.

18 I am not for the oil drilling. I've lived in
19 Virginia Beach 47 years. I have five generations
20 currently alive on the oceanfront. And I just want you
21 to know the changes that I've seen just in my eyes.
22 It's phenomenal.

23 I live at the oceanfront. I have never left.

24 I want you to think about it. Things that
25 wash up on the beach and that you collect, seashells,

1 that's my passion. I love it. Children are my passion.

2 And if we can give this to them and pass it on
3 in the state that it's in now and make it a little bit
4 better, then I feel I have done my job well.

5 Think about it.

6 (Applause)

7 MR. BJERSTEDT: Anyone else?

8 With that, thank you very much for coming, and
9 I'll close the meeting.

10

11 (Thereupon, the proceedings were concluded at
12 8:28 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE OF COURT REPORTER

I, Marianne Martini Holmes, RPR do hereby
certify that I reported verbatim the Bureau of Ocean
Energy Management meeting.

I further certify that the foregoing is a
true, accurate and complete transcript of said
proceedings.

Given under my hand this 30th day of April
2012 at Norfolk, Virginia.

Marianne Martini Holmes, RPR
Notary Registration No. 7021737

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