



JEB BUSH  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF FLORIDA

## Office of the Governor

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April 6, 2006

Ms. R. M. "Johnnie" Burton, Director  
Minerals Management Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, Northwest  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Ms. Burton:

Thank you for your recent correspondence seeking Florida's comments on the Minerals Management Service's (MMS) Draft Proposed 5-Year Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program for 2007-2012.

The Draft Program includes a number of acceptable proposals, including no leasing in the South Atlantic and the Straits of Florida Planning Areas and continuing the Presidential withdrawal to prevent new leasing in most of the Eastern Gulf of Mexico. The Draft Program also honors the Secretary of the Interior's commitment to withhold leasing in any areas of the Eastern Planning Area within 100 miles of Florida's coast.

However, I oppose the new administrative line established by MMS, which removes nearly 9.4 million acres of water – including water close to Florida's coast – from the Eastern Gulf of Mexico Planning Area. I strongly oppose the use of the new boundary, which was created for planning, coordination and administrative purposes, for identifying new planning areas and scheduling and holding lease sales. I also oppose the use of the new lines for federal consistency review pursuant to the Coastal Zone Management Act, which diminishes Florida's ability to review and provide official comments about the potential impact of offshore oil and gas activities on our sensitive coastal lands, waters and natural resources. Because of circulation patterns and the ecological relationships of flora and fauna in the Gulf of Mexico, the previous boundary better protected Florida's sensitive natural resources by more appropriately identifying the areas in which oil and gas activities would affect our coastal resources.



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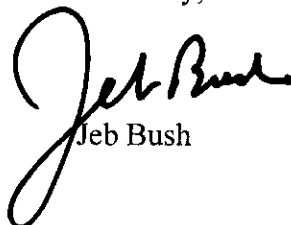
Ms. R. M. "Johnnie" Burton

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Protecting the Gulf of Mexico and our coastal resources, enjoyed by both Floridians and visitors from throughout the world, is a priority for my administration. Florida's tourist-based economy, which pumped more than \$57 billion into the state's economy in 2004 and included a record 85.8 million visitors in 2005, relies on a clean and healthy environment. With that in mind, the industrial activities related to offshore oil and gas development close to Florida's shores are not compatible with the state's objective to preserve the natural value of its coastal areas. The Draft Proposed 5-Year Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program for 2007-2012 should uphold Florida's clear and continued commitment to protect our sensitive natural environment, which are the lifeblood of our economy and quality of life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeb Bush". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

Jeb Bush