

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 17, 2022

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Republican Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

We write with the gravest possible concern about the national security implications of allowing offshore energy leasing and development east of the Military Mission Line in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico (EGOM). In 2006, Congress passed the *Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act* (GOMESA) which prohibited oil and gas exploration and development, among other places, east of the Military Mission Line in the EGOM. In 2020, President Trump extended the protections for the Gulf Test Range by using his authority under the *Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act* to withdraw the submerged lands of the test range from consideration for energy leasing or development, providing certainty that the range would continue to serve U.S. national security needs. Unfortunately, the *Inflation Reduction Act* stripped that protection and opens the door to offshore wind development in the Gulf Test Range.

Energy development in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico would catastrophically jeopardize the Gulf Test Range, which is crucial to our readiness for a fight in the Indo-Pacific. According to a report required by the Fiscal Year 2018 *National Defense Authorization Act*:

The eastern Gulf of Mexico is an irreplaceable national asset... the unique capabilities present in the region have been developed over decades through the investment of billions of taxpayer dollars and countless hours of effort by federal, state, and private organizations and local citizens. No other area in the world provides the U.S. military with ready access to a highly instrumented, network-connected, surrogate environment for military operations in the... Indo-Pacific Theater. ... No other area offers the DoD a comparable combination of air space, water space, and existing infrastructure to support military activities.¹

In discussions with experts in the Air Force on what allowing wind development in the Gulf Test Range would do to our testing capabilities, one individual stated that this was a “break-

¹ <https://www.noia.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/USDRE-RTC-on-Mil-Mission-Line-Moratorium-9May18-1.pdf>

glass-in-case-of-emergency situation.” The immediate and long-lasting national security impact of allowing exploration and development of wind energy inside the Gulf Test Range demands immediate Congressional action to protect the Gulf Test Range.

We must reinstate the moratorium on energy leasing and development east of the Military Mission Line in the Gulf of Mexico. As such, we introduced legislation and will seek to include language to protect our military asset in this year’s *National Defense Authorization Act*. We urge you to join us in protecting the critical capabilities the Gulf Test Range provides.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator



Michael Waltz
Member of Congress



Rick Scott
U.S. Senator



C. Scott Franklin
Member of Congress



Matt Gaetz
Member of Congress



Brian Mast
Member of Congress



Carlos A. Gimenez
Member of Congress



John H. Rutherford
Member of Congress



Mario Diaz Balart
Member of Congress



Bill Posey
Member of Congress



Neal P. Dunn, M.D.
Member of Congress



Maria Elvira Salazar
Member of Congress



Byron Donalds
Member of Congress



Gus Bilirakis
Member of Congress



Daniel Webster
Member of Congress



Kat Cammack
Member of Congress