July 26, 2017

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

Dear Secretary Zinke:

The Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act of 1953 declared that “the outer Continental Shelf is a vital national resource reserve held by the Federal Government for the public, which should be made available for expeditious and orderly development, subject to environmental safeguards, in a manner which is consistent with the maintenance of competition and other national needs.” We support many of the steps the Department has taken to strengthen and reinforce the United States’ position as an energy dominant superpower.

Pursuing a new Five Year Program will provide a meaningful review to guarantee that the offshore leasing program contributes to U.S. energy dominance and to ensure some of the most prolific regions of the United States have not been arbitrarily excluded from competitive leasing. We encourage you to carefully review those areas that were not included in the 2017-2022 Five Year Program to ensure that opportunities are not missed. Offshore development has undergone rapid technological innovation ensuring it is cheaper, safer, and provides access to previously out-of-reach areas.

Offshore leasing benefits the economies of all of the states, helps reduce the federal deficit, provides affordable energy to families and businesses, and strengthens our national security. However, offshore projects often have long lead times, so it is important to start today to make sure that the United States is planning for the future to maintain its steady and stable supply of production.

We look forward to working with the Department of the Interior as you advance the new Five Year Leasing program.

Sincerely,

Lisa Murkowski  
United States Senator

Bill Cassidy  
United States Senator

John Cornyn  
United States Senator

Luther Strange  
United States Senator