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Home > Atlantic Ocean opened for outer continental shelf oil and gas leasing

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The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) announced its 2017-2022 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing program which includes plans to open the Atlantic Ocean for oil and gas leasing. The 2012-2017 only includes oil and gas development in the Gulf of Mexico and Arctic Ocean. Although portions of the Atlantic Ocean are included in the plan, there is no guarantee that the region will be leased. Virginia currently does not have a revenue-share system like that of Gulf Coast states that would allow them to share in offshore oil development revenue.

Many Republicans expressed concern that the new plan is too restrained, excluding potential resources in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico, the Northern Atlantic, and the Pacific Ocean. Industry members also voiced concerns that the plan contains too little acreage. Some Eastern seaboard Democrats oppose the plan, citing the potential impact of an oil spill, similar to the Deepwater Horizon spill, on their beaches, fishermen, and tourism, while others favor the jobs that new leases would create.

Source: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, E&E News

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