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Chesapeake Climate Action Network Statement on President Obama's Proposal to Lift the Moratorium on Offshore Drilling in Virginia

Statement from Executive Director Mike Tidwell

“President Obama announced today a proposal to open vast expanses of water along the Atlantic coastline, including Virginia, to oil and natural gas drilling – a move that will do next to nothing to increase Virginia’s oil supplies but will further American dependence on dirty energy sources while putting the surrounding coasts, fisheries and tourism industry in danger.

“As climate change accelerates, the need to dramatically reduce our dependence on dirty fossil fuels such as oil becomes even more urgent. Instead of drilling offshore, we must begin exploring clean energy sources that are available now, including wind, solar and energy efficiency. A moderate investment in energy efficient technology would cut Virginia’s total energy use, save families money on their electric bills and create up to 10,000 new jobs. On top of efficiency improvements, Virginia has enormous offshore wind potential and a growing market for solar energy.

“It is also highly uncertain how much oil actually exists off the state’s coast. It’s also unclear how many jobs the industry will bring to the state. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, it takes about 10 years to bring new leases into production and another 10 years for them to achieve peak production.

“Clean energy is America’s future and Virginia can lead the way. Governor McDonnell and other Virginia leaders should pursue alternative sources of energy that are clean and available now.”

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