

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 16, 2016

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

As representatives from the Mid-Atlantic region, we write to express our support for the ocean planning process currently underway from Virginia to New York. We recognize that our economy and way of life are integrally linked to the Atlantic Ocean, making sound ocean planning essential.

In July, a Regional Planning Body made up of federal agencies, states, and tribes released a Draft Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan, which is currently open for public comment. This ocean planning process has prompted a broad range of federal agencies to come to our region and work directly with our state agencies to address challenges facing our modern ocean economy.

The Draft Ocean Action Plan employs non-regulatory means to accomplish two main goals: promote a healthy ocean ecosystem and advance sustainable ocean uses. Several elements of the Plan will benefit our mid-Atlantic residents:

- A revolutionary online ocean data portal that combines data, maps, and information from sources across government, academia, and industry for the first time, which is currently publicly available and will serve both government and industry;
- Improved coordination and communication among federal agencies, states, and tribes to foster transparency and increase government efficiency by reducing duplicative efforts;
- A commitment from federal agencies to use best practices to engage constituents and ocean users in ocean management decisions that will impact lives and livelihoods in our region.

Importantly, these solutions were developed in collaboration with representatives from communities and businesses throughout our region. Strong, inclusive public engagement must continue to serve as a foundation to this ocean planning effort as we move from planning to implementation. Consequently, we look forward to your meaningful consideration of comments submitted by our constituents as part of the ongoing public comment period.

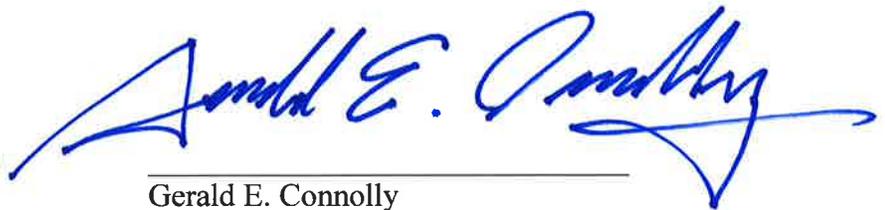
We are grateful to our constituents who have engaged in this planning process, and we look forward to continuing to work with our states, affected tribes, and the Administration on this important effort.

Sincerely,


Donald S. Beyer Jr.
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

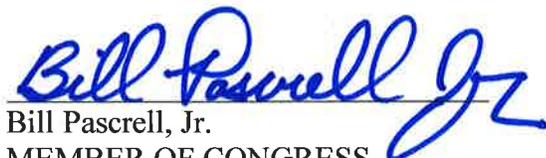

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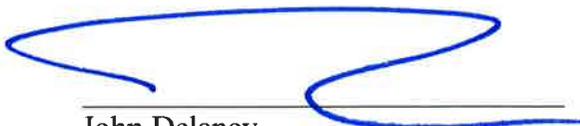

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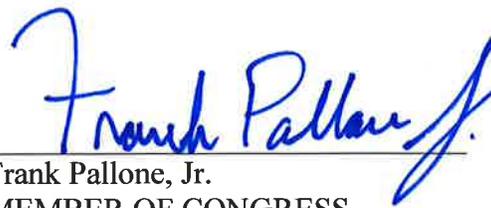

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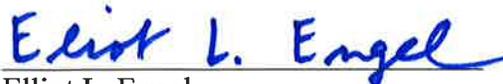
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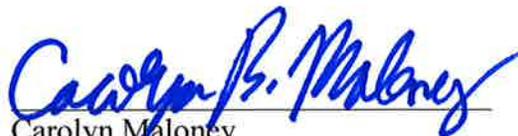
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