

August 25, 2003

Mr. David Kaiser, Federal Consistency Coordinator
Coastal Programs Division
Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, NOAA
1305 East-West Highway, 11th Floor
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Re: Coastal Zone Management Act Federal Consistency Regulations - Proposed Rule [Docket No. 030604145-3145-01]

Dear Mr. Kaiser:

Please be advised that we, the state legislative representatives of New Jersey's 9th District, representing parts of Ocean, Atlantic and Burlington counties, are in strong opposition to the proposed changes by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) as published in Volume 68, No. 112 of the Federal Register, dated Wednesday, June 11, 2003, as cited on pages 34851-34874.

For many years, this legislative delegation has fought off numerous attempts by government and private industry groups whose planned actions would have caused detrimental effects to the water quality of the Atlantic Ocean, the ocean floor, the air above and our shoreline. In addition, risking the health of our residents and tourists who swim, sail and fish our ocean waters. Fisheries and other wildlife existing in and above the ocean waters would also be affected if any drilling is permitted to take place.

New Jersey's tourism industry, as well as our overall environment, would suffer greatly if the federal government would allow the oil and gas industries to explore our ocean waters. We finally stopped New York City from dumping its sewage sludge off our coastal waters and helped defeat several mining attempts as well. We share the federal government's desire for this great nation to be less dependent on foreign oil, but not at the high price of ocean and coastal water quality.

We strongly urge the NOAA to withdraw the proposed changes to the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA). Changes that would expedite the issuance of permits to those who would ravage our ocean waters and shorelines. Reducing the review time which states and local governments have to properly and thoroughly investigate ocean drilling applications would certainly send the wrong signal to citizens of the United States of America, as well as the entire world, that the USA is a rubber-stamp for energy interests, not for its citizens nor its natural beauty.

Sincerely,

Senator Leonard T. Connors, Jr.
Assemblyman Christopher J. Connors
Assemblyman Brian E. Rumpf
9th District Representatives
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