April 26, 2019

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Executive Chamber
Capitol Building
Albany, N.Y. 12224

RE: S.2316 (Kaminsky)/A.2572 (Englebright)

Dear Governor Cuomo,

The Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter urges you to sign into law S.2316/A.2572, an act to amend the environmental conservation law, the transportation corporations law, and the navigation law that would restrict the development and use of infrastructure and vessels in New York associated with the production of oil or natural gas in federal waters.

This legislation would prohibit the leasing of state-owned underwater coastal lands by corporations to install infrastructure associated with the production of oil and natural gas in the North Atlantic Planning Area and would prohibit vessels from using New York waters if also associated with such oil and natural gas development.

The Trump Administration's draft proposed program for offshore oil and gas drilling and exploration would open 98% of U.S. federal waters to offshore leasing – even in states that have previously registered strong opposition. Virtually all federal waters off all coastal states are at risk, with nine lease sales proposed for the Atlantic Region, from the Florida Straits to Maine. Trump’s proposal would exponentially increase the likelihood of oil spills and other environmental harm.

In 2010, the Deepwater Horizon oil spill damaged more than 1,300 miles of coastline; an equivalent disaster in the Atlantic would coat beaches from Savannah to Boston, and devastate Long Island’s coastal ecosystem and economy. New York’s opposition to the Trump plan, and support for renewable energy development, including on-shore and offshore wind, solar and other forms of clean renewable energy has to be solidified through legislative action.
S.2316/A.2572 will bar New York State from supporting any oil and natural gas development in the North Atlantic Planning area and stop potentially devastating and irreversible spill impacts to New York’s coastal communities and economy. Prohibiting the leasing of state lands, disallowing condemnation of lands by corporations, and prohibiting the transport of oil or natural gas from the North Atlantic Planning Area is the only way to guarantee no harm will come to our environment or economy.

The Sierra Club urges you to sign S.2316/A.2572 into law. Thank you for your consideration of this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Roger Downs
Conservation Director
Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter