



**DEFENSE SUPPORT INITIATIVES COMMITTEE**  
OKALOOSA, SANTA ROSA AND WALTON COUNTIES

September 30, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
1236 Longworth H.O.B.  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Madam Speaker:

The Defense Support Initiatives Committee is concerned about the national security implications of allowing offshore energy leasing and development east of the Military Mission Line in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico (EGOM). In 2006, Congress passed the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act which prohibited oil and gas exploration and development, among other places, east of the Military Mission Line in the EGOM. In 2020, then President Trump extended the protections for the Eastern Gulf Test and Training Range (EGTTR) up through June 2032 by withdrawing the submerged lands of the test range from consideration for energy leasing or development—providing certainty that the military range would continue to serve U.S. national security needs. However, it has come to our attention that the Inflation Reduction Act, Title V, Subtitle B, Section 50251 strips that protection and threatens the EGTTR with offshore wind development.

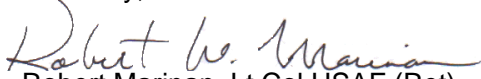
Energy infrastructure development in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico would encroach upon and catastrophically jeopardize the effectiveness of the EGTTR, which is crucial to our military readiness and national defense. According to the Preserving Military Readiness in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico report, required by the Fiscal Year 2018 National Defense Authorization Act:

*The eastern Gulf of Mexico is an irreplaceable national asset... the unique capabilities present in the region have been developed over decades through the investment of billions of taxpayer dollars and countless hours of effort by federal, state, and private organizations and local citizens. No other area in the world provides the U.S. military with ready access to a highly instrumented, network-connected, surrogate environment for military operations... No other area offers the DoD a comparable combination of air space, water space, and existing infrastructure to support military activities.*

We have entered a technological era demanding more range space for testing our military weapons and training our warfighters. The immediate and long-lasting national security impact of allowing exploration and development of energy infrastructure inside the EGTTR threatens our national security and demands immediate Congressional action to protect and sustain the military range.

We respectfully request a permanent moratorium but at a minimum, reinstatement of the moratorium on energy leasing and development east of the Military Mission Line in the Gulf of Mexico. Please support the Preserving the Gulf Test Range to Ensure Military Readiness Act. Protecting and ensuring our nation's military readiness capabilities provided by the EGTTR is critical.

Sincerely,

  
Robert Marinan, Lt Col USAF (Ret)  
Chairman

Cc: Senator Rubio, Senator Scott