MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT
Prohibit Offshore Oil and Gas Drilling on NY Coastal Land

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An ACT to amend the environmental conservation law, in relation to prohibiting state authorizations related to certain offshore oil and natural gas production.

JUSTIFICATION
The US Department of Interior and Bureau of Ocean Energy Management have proposed to open the Atlantic Region Outer Continental Shelf for the leasing, exploration and development of oil and gas. Offshore oil and gas drilling has caused lasting damage to communities around the country and allowing offshore drilling anywhere in the Atlantic threatens New York’s health, environment, and economy.

Offshore oil and gas exploration involves blasting the ocean with seismic air guns. These massive sonic blasts have been shown to cause massive disruption to marine life, from whales to zooplankton, and can kill or severely injure fish and shellfish, including those of commercial importance like squid, lobster, and scallops. Offshore drilling also brings the possibility of a spill, which would destroy fisheries and impair water quality for decades. The Deepwater Horizon spill alone was responsible for the deaths of more than 80,000 birds from 102 different species.

In addition to the potential direct impacts from seismic blasts, leaks, and spills; offshore oil and gas drilling would thwart the significant investments made to mitigate climate change locally and improve water quality in our bays, lakes, estuaries, and ocean. New York is already experiencing the impacts of climate change and has committed to strong renewable energy goals and greenhouse gas reductions. By prohibiting the leasing of New York’s underwater coastal lands for oil and gas drilling and preventing any leases that would support federal offshore oil and gas exploration, New York can defend our waters and stop offshore drilling locally.

SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS
- Prohibit the leasing of state-owned underwater coastal lands for oil and natural gas drilling.
- Prevent New York State from authorizing leases that would result in the increase of oil or natural gas production from federal waters.