August 14, 2020

Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith

702 Hart Senate Office Building

Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Hyde-Smith,

I wish to express my strong desire to protect the Eastern Gulf Test & Training Range from drilling and related activities. While energy independence is a worthy objective, drilling and exploratory activities in the eastern Gulf of Mexico threatens both our nation’s security and, with more than 78,000 local jobs tied to the defense sector, our county’s economy.

It is widely recognized that the Gulf Range is a national treasure, unable to be replicated anywhere else in the continental United States. These sentiments were confirmed when, in a May 09, 2018 letter, the Under Secretary of Defense wrote:

“*The eastern Gulf of Mexico continues to be a strategic national asset critical to the lethality of our weapon systems and the readiness of our Service members; hence it is a vital component to harnessing the power of the advanced technologies required to support our National Defense Strategy*.”

Similarly, a May 2018 Pentagon Congressional report (Preserving Military Readiness in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico) states:

“*The EGOMEX (eastern Gulf of Mexico) is an irreplaceable national asset. No other area offers the DoD (Department of Defense) a comparable combination of air space, water space, and existing infrastructure to support military activities*.”

While drilling advocates have cited a potential economic impact resulting from drilling activities in the eastern Gulf as near 56,000 jobs and $2.6 billion in annual revenue; the resultant loss would be much greater. The January 2020 Florida Defense Factbook sites Eglin Air Force Base in NW Florida as providing an impact of over $9 billion annually and over 78,000 jobs. That economic impact would be at risk, not to mention our national security, if drilling and related exploratory activities were allowed in the EGOMEX military training range.

Oil drilling structures and associated exploratory activities east of the Military Mission Line have been identified as being incompatible with military activities, would negatively impact our military’s readiness and compromise our nation’s military superiority. On a more personal note, failure to protect the Eastern Gulf Test & Training Range from drilling and related activities will negatively impact me [FILL IN YOUR REASON HERE]. I respectfully request your support in continuing to protect this American asset by passing permanent sustainment of the Military Mission Line moratorium.

Respectfully,

YOUR NAME

STREET ADDRESS

CITY, STATE ZIP