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API Announces Bipartisan “Explore Offshore” Coalition Supporting Expanded Access To U.S. Natural Gas and Oil Resources

Former Secretary of the Navy and former Democratic Virginia Senator Jim Webb and Former Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson Serving as bipartisan National Co-Chairs; More than 100 Diverse Community Organizations, Associations, Businesses and Local Leaders in VA, NC, SC, GA and FL supporting expanded access to U.S. natural gas and oil resources

WASHINGTON, June 6, 2018 –Today, API launched “Explore Offshore”, a new coalition of more than 100 diverse community organizations, associations, businesses and local leaders in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida who support increased access to offshore U.S. natural gas and oil for responsible development using advanced technologies. The coalition will be co-chaired by former Secretary of the Navy and former Democratic Virginia Senator Jim Webb and former Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson.

Erik Milito, API Director of Upstream and Industry Operations: “The Explore Offshore coalition demonstrates the broad bipartisan support of local communities for expanded access to U.S. natural gas and oil resources and the National Offshore Leasing Plan, which will play a critical role in America’s long-term energy and economic future.”

Former Secretary of the Navy and Democratic Senator from Virginia Jim Webb, Explore Offshore Co-Chairman: “This is a much-needed, commonsense step for America’s energy future. Energy security is national security, and domestic energy production is a key contributor to a healthy national economy. Oil and natural gas are the key drivers of the world’s economies. We remain vulnerable in an expanding global economy marked by ever-growing energy needs. In its move toward an “all of the above” energy policy, America needs to correct a timeworn oversight and modernize the unnecessarily restrictive approach to the exploration and safe development of oil and natural gas resources that lie offshore. Technology, drilling techniques and industry standards have all changed greatly since these restrictions were put into place. Our national policies should mirror the significant advances that have been made in these areas, for the good of our national security and of our economy.”

Former Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson, Explore Offshore Co-Chairman: “This is an important moment for the future of U.S. energy and national security. With 94 percent of the Outer Continental Shelf currently off-limits to exploration and development, and demand for natural gas and oil expected to rise, we must take this opportunity to increase our domestic energy reserves. Domestic energy sources are critical to reliable and affordable energy for U.S. consumers, as well as an important source of energy for our military operations and ensuring that we don’t continue to rely on foreign adversaries for our energy. Offshore oil and natural gas development in the U.S. also provides important, higher-paying job opportunities for our veterans across the country.”

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Explore Offshore Chairmen

Secretary Jim Nicholson: *Secretary Jim Nicholson served as Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (2005-2007) and as the U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See. During his tenure as ambassador, Pope John Paul II knighted Mr. Nicholson for his leadership on human rights issues in Europe. He was a director of New Community Development Corporation and Commissioner of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS), both Presidential appointments. He was also the chairman of the Federal Interagency Council on Homelessness. Sec. Nicholson is a West Point graduate who served in Vietnam as an Army Ranger, and was awarded the Bronze Star, the Combat Infantry Badge, the Vietnamese Cross for Gallantry and two Air Medals.*

Secretary and former Senator Jim Webb: *Jim Webb is a former Democratic United States Senator from Virginia (2007-2013) with an extensive background in military and public service. Senator Webb was also a combat Marine, a counsel in the Congress, an assistant secretary of defense and Secretary of the Navy, an Emmy-award winning journalist, a film-maker, and the author of ten books. Mr. Webb graduated from the Naval Academy in 1968, receiving a special commendation for his leadership contributions. First in his class of 243 at the Marine Corps Officer's Basic School, he served as a rifle platoon and company commander in Vietnam and was awarded the Navy Cross, the Silver Star Medal, two Bronze Star Medals, and two Purple Hearts.*

Explore Offshore is a bipartisan coalition representing a diverse group of community organizations, businesses, and local associations across the Southeast that support safe and responsible expanded U.S. access to oil and natural gas through advanced technologies. Explore Offshore will host local events and engage and educate local communities on safe and responsible access to U.S. resources and the related positive economic and energy benefits to America.

API is the only national trade association representing all facets of the oil and natural gas industry, which supports 10.3 million U.S. jobs and nearly 8 percent of the U.S. economy. API's more than 625 members include large integrated companies, as well as exploration and production, refining, marketing, pipeline, and marine businesses, and service and supply firms. They provide most of the nation's energy and are backed by a growing grassroots movement of more than 40 million Americans.

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