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Sherry A. Frear, RLA
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Landmarks Program
Cultural Resources, Partnerships, and Science
1849 C Street, NW Mail Stop 7228
Washington, D.C. 20240

April 30, 2024

RE: Mr. Charlie Offshore Oil Rig National Historic Landmark Designation

Dear Ms. Frear,

On behalf of the National Ocean Industries Association, I positively support the nomination of *Mr. Charlie* for designation as a National Historic Landmark.

NOIA represents the interests of all segments of the offshore energy industry, encompassing offshore oil and gas, offshore wind, offshore minerals, offshore carbon capture, use, and sequestration (CCUS), and other emerging technologies. Our membership includes energy project leaseholders, developers, and the entire supply chain of companies that constitute an innovative ecosystem contributing to the safe and responsible development and production of offshore energy. *Mr. Charlie* serves as the genesis of our industry, across all our segments.

The first offshore oil well was drilled in the Gulf of Mexico south of Morgan City, LA in 1947 by building a fixed platform and erecting a land drilling rig on its deck. While working in Morgan City, Alden “Doc” Laborde came up with the idea of a portable, self-contained drilling rig, *Mr. Charlie*.

Mr. Charlie revolutionized the offshore oil and gas drilling industry, and every offshore drilling rig today is built from the concept and design of *Mr. Charlie*.

Mr. Charlie was built by Ocean Drilling and Exploration Company (ODECO) in New Orleans, LA at Alexander Shipyard. It left the shipyard on June 15, 1954, and drilled offshore for oil and gas for thirty-two years.

As the first portable and reusable offshore drilling rig, *Mr. Charlie* was the revolution in technology heard around the world. Its impact was not only felt locally but was felt around the world and is still felt today.

Engineering the rig so that the hull can be submerged for drilling in waters up to 40' deep was unheard of and deemed impossible. Yet, *Mr. Charlie* was not only successful, drilling offshore for 32 years, outlasting every other rig of its time.

Today, nearly two million barrels of oil is produced daily in the Gulf of Mexico¹. Globally, about 28% of oil produced comes from the offshore².

Mr. Charlie was more than just an engineering revolution; it was a cultural and economic revolution. New jobs and businesses were created, and economies were boosted locally, nationally, and internationally. National and international economies are still fueled by these same offshore oil and gas industries.

In the U.S. alone, the Gulf of Mexico oil and gas industry supports nearly 370,000 jobs and generates \$32 billion in annual spending across all 50 states³. This industry contributes billions of dollars in revenue to federal, state, and local governments every year, funding key programs like the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) in their entirety⁴. These funds provide diverse benefits, including conservation, preservation, and recreation, benefiting all Americans.

Mr. Charlie deserves to be recognized for its contribution to the culture and economy of this nation by its nomination as a National Historic Landmark. *Mr. Charlie* is recognized by the American Welding Society as a National Historic Welded Structure and by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers as a Mechanical Engineering Landmark. *Mr. Charlie* is located at The Rig Museum in Morgan City, Louisiana where students and tourists learn about the energy industry by touring the historic rig. This historic and renowned structure continues in an important role, teaching others about an industry that changed the world: the offshore oil industry.

Mr. Charlie's invention demonstrates the ground-breaking interdisciplinary collaboration of experts in petroleum drilling and naval engineering. The importance of preserving and recognizing our cultural heritage cannot be overstated. *Mr. Charlie* is the only surviving representation of the history of the early offshore oil and gas drilling operations.

I strongly urge you to designate *Mr. Charlie* a National Historic Landmark. Please do not hesitate to reach out should have further questions.

Best regards,



Erik Milito
President
National Ocean Industries Association

¹ <https://www.eia.gov/dnav/pet/hist/LeafHandler.ashx?n=PET&s=MCRFP3FM2&f=M>

² <https://www.iea.org/data-and-statistics/charts/offshore-oil-and-gas-production-by-scenario-2016-2040>

³ <https://www.eiapartners.com/blog/news/api-noia-release-new-eiap-analysis-potential-lapse-in-5-year-leasing-program-threatens-american-energy-security>

⁴ <https://revenue.data.doi.gov/how-revenue-works/lwcf/>