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## 10 Reasons Not to Drill for Oil Offshore of Florida

### 1. Florida's Economy

Florida's economy is based on having clean beaches and a healthy environment, not oil refineries, storage tanks, oil platforms and pipelines.

Texas oil industry representatives estimate oil and gas operations in Florida could yield \$1.5 billion a year in revenues and could create 16,000 jobs (the majority of these jobs will likely not be located in Florida).

Tourism employs about 1 million people living in Florida. Tourism generates about \$65 billion-a-year for the state of Florida.

Whatever oil revenues are realized is small when compared to the cost in damages one oil spill will have on Florida's economy, environment and job employment.

A proper economic assessment of offshore oil drilling can only be made when the following are considered: Costs of the loss of recreation and tourism dollars, the irretrievable commitment of chemicals used in the separation and processing of oil and gas; the hazards associated with transportation of dangerous and volatile chemicals associated with oil exploration and processing, the increased costs associated with reduced national security, the costs of the health impacts associated with increased air and water pollution, and the costs of the unavoidable impacts to Florida's coastal and marine environment .

### 2. National Security

Americans consume 25 percent of the world's produced oil, but our nation holds less than 3 percent of the world's proven oil reserves.

As a matter of national policy, it seems strategically reckless to continue to deplete our nation's very limited oil and gas resources.

The more domestic oil we consume, the less oil we will have in the future and the less secure our nation will be.

### 3. Oil Exports

The United States exports approximately 1.2 million barrels of petroleum products each day to foreign countries.

The Department of Energy predicts that 200,000 barrels of petroleum could be produced per day at the height of offshore oil production in Florida in 2030. This is roughly 1/9th the amount of oil exported each day to foreign nations.

At the current rate of oil exportation, we will have exported the equivalent of 40% of the oil reserves predicted to be offshore of Florida before the first barrel of oil is ever extracted.

#### **4. Oil Leases**

90 million acres of federal lands are currently leased to oil companies. Less than a quarter of these lands are being used for oil and gas production. Flooding the market with huge area-wide offshore oil leases will drive down the price of oil and gas leases and reduce competition. The American taxpayers will lose out on billions of dollars of oil revenues. The glut of oil leases being offered will provide the oil industry an opportunity to lease large blocks of submerged lands at bargain basement prices.

#### **5. Prices at the gas pump**

Offshore Oil Drilling does not reduce gas prices at the pump.

California produces more than 600,000 million barrels of oil per day and Alaska produces more than 1,300,000 million barrels per day. Both states have higher gas prices at the pump than does Florida.

Floridians can expect to pay more for gas at the pump because offshore oil drilling will give Legislators the incentive to raise gasoline taxes in an attempt to balance the state budget.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration has stated that increasing "access to the Pacific, Atlantic and eastern Gulf regions would not have a significant impact on domestic crude oil and natural gas production or prices before 2030."

#### **6. Oil Spills**

There is no question that the record of the offshore oil industry with respect to oil spills is improving. This record, however, does not mean there will be no more spills. The ability of the oil industry to respond effectively to such spills is questionable at best.

Nearly 63,000 gallons of crude leaked from a cracked oil pipeline 30 miles off the Louisiana coast in 2009.

In May 2007, corrosion in a pipeline off Louisiana spilled about 8,000 gallons of oil.

In December 2006, approximately 36,000 gallons of oil spilled at the Galveston Lightering Area in the Gulf.

A significant environmental impact from even a minor oil spill of 100 barrels or less can cause significant damage. Should oil reach the Florida coastline, it will render many areas uninhabitable to plants and animals, destroy egg and larva of marine organisms and affect marine life and food chains. Petroleum hydrocarbons are extremely toxic even at very low concentrations.

## **7. Hurricanes**

Florida perhaps faces a greater potential for the occurrence of natural hazards than any other state. Florida ranks first in hurricane occurrences and is the most vulnerable to the devastating effects resulting from coastal storms.

Hurricanes can and have caused oil spills.

The U.S. Government's Minerals Management Service states that Hurricanes Katrina and Rita damaged or destroyed 113 oil platforms, 457 oil pipelines and caused 124 offshore oil spills in the Gulf of Mexico. More than 9,000,000 gallons of oil were spilled from onshore tanks and pipelines as a result of the two storms. The U.S. Coast Guard reported that there were over 9 million gallons of oil released from six major and five medium spills.

There is no reason to believe that future oil drilling will protect Florida's economy and environment from the potentially serious environmental damage associated with offshore oil drilling and onshore oil spills associated with hurricanes.

## **8. Onshore Health and Environmental Impacts**

Oil and gas operations require roads, storage tanks, pipelines, processing facilities, and other industrial facilities. These can severely damage beaches, wetlands, and coastal habitats with consequences for Florida residents that depend on tourism, recreation and fishing.

Oil and gas processing plants can result in the degradation of air quality. Onshore gas processing activities typically emit constant levels of volatile organic compounds, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide and total suspended particulates.

Processing and oil separation require large volumes of water. The addition of one or several gas processing plants in Florida will have significant impacts on local water supplies.

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The oil and gas industry should not be permitted to externalize the costs of the air, water and land pollution they create at the expense of the environment and the public's health.

## 9. Energy Conservation

It is in the best interests of our environment, economy and national security to develop truly renewable energy resources such as solar and wind. The best option more economical than any new energy supply and causing no increase in atmospheric greenhouse gas levels, is energy conservation and increased energy efficiency.

Increasing the average U.S. auto efficiency and improving home insulation across the country would significantly reduce our energy consumption.

Conservation is a cheaper and healthier way for the country to buy time to develop renewable energy sources than the measures that will have to be employed in the development of offshore oil reserves.

## 10. Offshore Environmental Impacts

In addition to pipeline blowouts or leaks causing serious environmental problems, laying offshore pipes will cause increased turbidity of marine waters, destruction of sea grass beds and resuspension of contaminated sediments. Fish resources will be impacted by environmental degradation, pipeline trenching, and offshore drilling discharges associated with routine oil and gas drilling operations.

Oil drilling will place the Eastern Gulf of Mexico, an area of high environmental sensitivity and marine productivity, at risk. Presently the region supports numerous species of wildlife, major commercial and recreational fisheries and several species of endangered animals.

Seismic surveys require the use of air guns, which use explosive blasts to map rock formations on the sea floor. Sound from these underwater blasts can be detected for thousands of miles. Seismic testing can have profound, even fatal effects on marine mammals.

Accidental oil drilling and transportation events have the potential to impact small to large numbers of sea turtles.

In light of the real dangers of offshore oil drilling, Florida legislators should commit to developing clean alternative sources of energy. The beauty of our beaches and the productivity of our estuarine areas will ultimately prove to be more important than oil industry profits.