

RESOLUTION NO. 08-26

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF CLEARWATER CONCERNING THE EXPANSION OF OFF SHORE OIL DRILLING IN THE GULF OF MEXICO IN AREAS OTHER THAN THOSE ALREADY APPROVED FOR OIL LEASING AND OIL EXPLORATION; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE

WHEREAS, the Congressional ban of offshore oil drilling, which has been in effect since 1981, was put in place to reduce the chances of environmental damage from oil spills and to protect the tourism industry; and

WHEREAS, the Congressional ban states that no funds may be expended by the Department of the Interior for the conduct of offshore preleasing, leasing and related activities placed under restriction in the President's moratorium statement of June 12, 1998, in the areas of northern, central, and southern California; the North Atlantic; Washington and Oregon; and the eastern Gulf of Mexico, south of 26 degrees N latitude and east of 86 degrees W longitude; and

WHEREAS, the US Energy Department's forecasting arm has said opening of the Pacific, Atlantic and eastern Gulf of Mexico regions to drilling would not have significant impact on domestic crude oil prices before the year 2030; and

WHEREAS, tourism accounts for one-third of our budget revenues statewide and 96% of those visitors cite the beaches as an influential factor in their decision to visit Florida; and

WHEREAS, tourist tax collection statewide exceeded \$513,385,000.00 in FY 2007 and more than 91,000 Floridians are employed in businesses that directly or indirectly support tourism; and

WHEREAS, the area with the potential for the greatest risk of environmental damage is the eastern part of the Gulf of Mexico, off the western coast of Florida; and

WHEREAS, environmental specialists contend the major risk from drilling platforms is the wastewater they routinely discharge which contain drilling fluids and heavy metals including mercury; and

WHEREAS, according to oil industry data, an oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico can dump up to 90,000 tons of drilling fluid and metal cuttings over its lifetime. These contaminants accumulate in the marine food web and could reasonably be expected to contaminate local beaches and have a negative effect on the environment and tourism industry; and

WHEREAS, the City recognizes the difference in the risk of impact from drilling for oil as opposed to natural gas; and

WHEREAS, it is our belief that despite technological advances in oil rig drilling technology, there is no positive assurance that catastrophic damage to our coastline, beaches, plant and fish life could be avoided during normal operating conditions or during storm situations; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CLEARWATER, FLORIDA:

Section 1. That before any expansion past the areas already approved for leasing and oil production activities is considered, the existing leases must be exercised and utilized where found to be productive.

Section 2. That the City of Clearwater believes that immediate steps to encourage and assist in the development of alternative sources of energy should also be implemented before any expansion of oil drilling rights in the Gulf of Mexico is granted.

Section 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 4th day of September, 2008.

**Frank V. Hibbard
Mayor**

Attest:

**Cynthia E. Goudeau
City Clerk**