



**WALTON AREA
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**
Guiding the power of business.
Strengthening community.

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**Walton Area Chamber of Commerce
Resolution against Offshore Drilling in the Gulf of Mexico
East of the Military Mission Line**

WHEREAS the Walton Area Chamber is a membership organization of nearly 1,300 comprised of members representing businesses, industry and local governments; and

WHEREAS all military installations in the Northwest Florida, including Tyndall Air Force Base, Naval Support Activity Panama City, Eglin Air Force Base, Hurlbut Field, Pensacola Naval Air Station and NAS Whiting Field, conduct training missions in this vast test range; and

WHEREAS former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, in response to inquiries from the Senate Armed Services Committee, stated that prior analysis and existing agreements with the Department of the Interior recognize that areas east of the 86" 41' line in the Gulf of Mexico (commonly known as the "Military Mission Line") are especially critical to the Department of Defense due to the number of and diversity of military testing and training activities conducted there now and those planned for the future; and in those areas east of the Military Mission Line, drilling structures and associated development would be incompatible with military activities such as missile nights, low flying aircraft, weapons testing, and training; and

WHEREAS the hospitality industry in Walton County is the largest sector of the local economy and relies on the pristine quality of the area beaches to attract tourists from all over the world and drilling in close proximity will threaten the sustainability of Walton County's primary attraction; and

WHEREAS protecting Walton County's beaches and waters from the threat of environmental impacts attributable to offshore activities, including physical disturbances caused by anchoring, pipeline placement and rig construction, the resuspension of bottom sediments and pollution from drilling and production discharges, preserves Walton County's economic and environmental interests.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Walton Area Chamber of Commerce strongly opposes the idea of offshore drilling in the Gulf of Mexico east of the Military Mission Line, in that it will disrupt the planning area established by the Department of the Interior's Mineral Management Services and the Department of Defense for use by the United States Armed Services for military training and testing purposes.

WALTON AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Chair, John Forrester

Date: June 15, 2009