



**Stacy Ritter, Mayor**

Commissioner – District 3

954-357-7003

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e-mail: [sritter@broward.org](mailto:sritter@broward.org)

June 12, 2009

The Honorable Bill Nelson  
United States Senate  
716 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-7

Dear Senator Nelson:

On behalf of the Broward County Board of County Commissioners, I am writing to thank you for your continued and staunch opposition to the oil and gas drilling provision recently added to the energy bill. As part of the Florida Delegation, you have been a great champion in this fight by combating efforts to reduce the current 235-mile excavation barrier around South Florida coastal regions. As you noted in your comments this week, eviscerating the current zones of protection in South Florida and the panhandle would hamper military efforts and disregard the 2006 agreement that opened eight million acres of the east-central Gulf Coast to oil and gas development in exchange for the current no-drilling areas, at least until 2022.

As you know, Broward County derives significant benefit from Florida's 82 million visitors, including a substantial portion of the nearly \$4 billion in tourism-generated tax receipts. Loosening prohibitions against offshore excavation will increase the potential for environmental damage to Florida's coastal habitats. While proponents of oil and gas drilling continue to ratchet-up their marketing of "clean" technologies and innovative platforms which might reduce the unsightliness of excavation, it is disingenuous of energy interests to claim that the hazards inherent in their business practices do not remain extraordinary. In a part of the world that regularly finds itself in the path of major hurricanes, the potential devastation that would be caused to marine life, beaches, the Everglades, and our residents by a rig sustaining catastrophic structural damage near Florida is undeniable.

Presently, no peer-reviewed and scientifically accepted evidence exists that expanding energy exploration will reduce consumer costs of fuel. In fact, the US Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration acknowledges that even with the passage of this provision to permit additional drilling off Florida's coast, no increase in domestic production is expected until 2030. As a result, political leaders, advocates, environmentalists, visitors and those who care about Florida's natural resources are left wondering who, besides the oil and gas production industry, might benefit if the cost of gas will not decrease and production will not increase.

**While other states should perhaps have the right to determine their own destiny, our Board adamantly opposes offshore drilling in any proximity to the state of Florida. Thank you for maintaining your commitment to opposing energy excavation efforts of any kind off the coast of Florida.**

Sincerely,

Stacy Ritter  
Mayor

SR:PL:GH:cmt

- C: Broward County Board of County Commissioners
- Bertha Henry, County Administrator
- Pamela Madison, Assistant County Administrator
- Pamela Landi, Governmental Relations Manager



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June 12, 2009

The Honorable Mel Martinez  
United States Senate  
356 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Martinez:

On behalf of the Broward County Board of County Commissioners, I am writing to request your opposition to an oil and gas drilling provision recently added to the energy bill. As an important member of the Florida Delegation, we know you have staunchly opposed reductions to the current 235-mile excavation barrier around South Florida coastal regions. By eviscerating the current zones of protection in South Florida and the panhandle, Congress would disregard the 2006 agreement that opened 8 million acres of the east-central Gulf Coast to oil and gas development in exchange for the current no-drilling areas, at least until 2022.

As you know, Broward County derives significant benefit from Florida's 82 million visitors, including a substantial portion of the nearly \$4 billion in tourism-generated tax receipts. Loosening prohibitions against offshore excavation will increase the potential for environmental damage to Florida's coastal habitats. While proponents of oil and gas drilling continue to ratchet-up their marketing of "clean" technologies and innovative platforms which might reduce the unsightliness of excavation, it is disingenuous of energy interests to claim that the hazards inherent in their business practices do not remain extraordinary. In a part of the world that regularly finds itself in the path of major hurricanes, the potential devastation that would be caused to marine life, beaches, the Everglades, and our residents by a rig sustaining catastrophic structural damage near Florida is undeniable.

Presently, no peer-reviewed and scientifically accepted evidence exists that expanding energy exploration will reduce consumer costs of fuel. In fact, the US Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration acknowledges that even with the passage of this provision to permit additional drilling off Florida's coast, no increase in domestic production is expected until 2030. As a result, political leaders, advocates, environmentalists, visitors and those who care about Florida's natural resources are left wondering who, besides the oil and gas production industry, might benefit if the cost of gas will not decrease and production will not increase.

While other states should perhaps have the right to determine their own destiny, our Board adamantly opposes offshore drilling in any proximity to the state of Florida. Thank you for maintaining your commitment to opposing energy excavation efforts of any kind off the coast of Florida.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stacy Ritter".

Stacy Ritter  
Mayor

SR:PL:GH:cmt

C: Broward County Board of County Commissioners  
Bertha Henry, County Administrator  
Pamela Madison, Assistant County Administrator  
Pamela Landi, Governmental Relations Manager

**Distribution:**

The Honorable Mel Martinez  
The Honorable Lincoln Diaz-Balart  
The Honorable Alcee L. Hastings  
The Honorable Ron Klein  
The Honorable Kendrick B. Meek  
The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
The Honorable Robert Wexler