

RESOLUTION 2009-93

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF GULFPORT, FLORIDA, OPPOSING THE APPROVAL OF OFFSHORE OIL DRILLING IN THE GULF OF MEXICO IN AREAS OTHER THAN THOSE ALREADY APPROVED FOR OIL LEASING AND OIL EXPLORATION; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

**WHEREAS**, the Congressional ban on 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 pre-leasing, 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 the Pacific, Atlantic and eastern Gulf of Mexico regions to drilling would not have a significant impact on domestic crude oil prices before the year 2030; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2009, House Bill 1219 was introduced into the Legislature of the State of Florida which would allow drilling for oil and gas to within three (3) miles of Florida's coastline (mean high tide line); and

**WHEREAS**, tourism accounts for one-third of Florida's budget revenues and 95% of the visitors to Pinellas County's barrier island beaches cite "white sandy beaches" and a "clean, unspoiled environment" as influential factors in their decision to visit; and

**WHEREAS**, tourism related to Pinellas County's barrier island beaches accounts for annual direct and indirect visitor expenditures of approximately \$7 billion; and

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

**WHEREAS**, in 1993, residents, businesses and visitors of Pinellas County experienced first-hand the devastating health, economic, environmental and recreational impacts resulting from a "minor spill" of 362,000 gallons of oil and fuel in Tampa Bay; and

**WHEREAS**, in spite of the Florida Chamber of Commerce's and others' position that new technology has made offshore drilling safe and environmentally friendly with no major spills in over 30 years and they are proposing drilling at three to six miles offshore, oil companies with this new technology still legally pollute by dumping drilling waste mud, cuttings, drainage and other matter every day that contain toxic waste, including heavy metals such as lead, mercury and cadmium, and carcinogens such as benzene, toluene and arsenic; and

**WHEREAS**, offshore oil operations have a significant onshore industrial support network, and this network would have a large scale impact on coastal environments and communities; 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 COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GULFPORT, FLORIDA:**

**Section 1.** The City Council hereby encourages all elected officials at the County, State and Federal levels to oppose legislative attempts to allow offshore drilling expansion in the eastern Gulf of Mexico past the areas already approved for pre-leasing, leasing and oil production activities and to take immediate steps to encourage and assist in the development of alternate sources of energy.

**Section 2.** This resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 15th day of September, 2009, by the Council of the City of Gulfport, Florida.

  
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Michael J. Yakes, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
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Lesley DeMuth, City Clerk