

RESOLUTION 2009-19

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF ST. PETE BEACH, FLORIDA, OPPOSING THE APPROVAL OF OFF SHORE OIL DRILLING IN THE GULF OF MEXICO IN AREAS OTHER THAN THOSE ALREADY APPROVED FOR OIL LEASING AND OIL EXPLORATION; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the Congressional ban on off shore 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 tourist industry.

WHEREAS, the Congressional ban states that no funds may be expended by the Department of the Interior for the conduct of off shore 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".

WHEREAS, the U.S. 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.

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.

WHEREAS, resort tax collection statewide exceeded 25 million dollars in FY 2007 and almost 86 thousand Floridians are employed in businesses that directly or indirectly support tourism.

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.

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.

***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 might contaminate local beaches and have a negative effect on the environment and the tourism industry.*

***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.*

***THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the City Commission of the City of St. Pete Beach, Florida, that we encourage all elected officials at the County, State and Federal levels to oppose legislative attempts to allow off shore oil drilling expansion 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.*

***INTRODUCED AND PASSED** by the City Commission of the City of St. Pete Beach, Florida, on the 3rd day of September, 2009.*

Mike Finnerty

Mayor

Theresa McMaster

City Clerk