

RESOLUTION 2009-1

A RESOLUTION OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE BARRIER ISLANDS GOVERNMENT COUNCIL (BIG-C) OPPOSING OFFSHORE DRILLING IN STATE CONTROLLED WATERS OFF THE COASTLINE OF FLORIDA; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the Barrier islands Government Council, known as the BIG-C, consists of eleven cities and towns on the barrier islands in the Gulf of Mexico on the west coast of Pinellas County, Florida; and

WHEREAS, the oil drilling economic benefits alleged fail to take into account the risks to Florida's tourism industry due to offshore drilling rigs, pipelines, storage facilities, vessels and other infrastructure in and on Florida land and waters that are in direct visual, physical and environmental conflict with the world-class beaches that are the basis of Florida's tourism and economy; and

WHEREAS, despite technological advances in oil rig drilling technology, there is no positive assurance that catastrophic damage to our coastline, beaches, plant and fish life can be avoided—whether from drilling mud containing heavy metals such as mercury, regular production, or accidental oil spills—and whether during normal operating conditions or during storm situations; and

WHEREAS, on August 21, 2009, a major oil spill began spewing oil into ocean waters off the western coast of Australia, a spill that had reached 6,000 square miles by September 14, 2009 and was expected to continue to flow for 6 weeks, using state-of-the-art technology touted as the safest ever by the oil industry and further claimed to be the same technology that would be used in Florida waters; and

WHEREAS, in 1993 Pinellas County learned how environmentally and economically destructive an oil spill can be when a vessel collision at the entrance to Tampa Bay resulted in a spill of more than 300,000 gallons that reached Pinellas beaches as far away as 14 miles and resulted in a 45% drop in tourism and a \$5 billion economic loss over the following two years; and

WHEREAS, offshore drilling spills are a significant threat to the beaches that 95% of Pinellas tourists say are one of the top reasons they come to Florida, to Pinellas County's tourism expenditures that amount to \$6.6 billion annually, to the State of Florida's tourism that amounts to \$60 billion annually; and that spills can be carried by Gulf of Mexico currents to miles of coastline on both the east and west coasts of Florida; and

WHEREAS, hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico are a fact of life and can result in spills—as did Hurricanes Katrina and Rita near Louisiana in 2005, where hundreds of platforms and pipelines were destroyed and nearly three-quarters of a million gallons of oil and petroleum products were spilled from rigs, platforms and pipelines; and

Resolution 2009-1 - BIG-C

WHEREAS, given that Florida waters extend no more than 10 miles from the coastline, drilling rigs of any size would be seen on the horizon in the daytime, in the sunset and especially at night; and

WHEREAS, oil rigs and the pipelines that support them, including their required setback areas, severely limit access to the scarce sand sources that are vital to Florida's beach re-nourishment program; and

WHEREAS, Florida citizens and legislators have been led to believe that offshore drilling in Florida waters is needed immediately—to provide revenue to the State, to lower the price of gasoline, to eliminate the United States' dependency on foreign oil, and to provide additional area where oil companies can drill—when in fact it would likely be several years before production would begin and decades before alleged production volumes would be achieved; and the volumes alleged would have negligible effect on gas prices and our country's dependence on foreign oil.


THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the representatives of the Barrier Islands Government Council that we unanimously oppose legislative attempts to allow offshore oil drilling in any of the waters under the jurisdiction of the State of Florida, and that we encourage all elected officials at the County, State and Federal levels to join us in our opposition, as well as in our efforts to encourage and assist in the development of alternate sources of energy.

The foregoing Resolution was offered during regular Session of the Barrier Islands Governmental Council of Pinellas County, Florida, sitting on the 30th day of September 2009, by Mayor John Robertson, who moved its adoption; was seconded by Commissioner Terry Hamilton-Wollin; and upon roll call and subsequent passage of the Resolution by the City of Belleair Beach, the vote was:

YEAS: 11
NAYS: None
ABSTAINING: None


Mayor James J. Lawrence

ATTEST:


Mayor Nick Simons, Vice President