

HJR 383 Ban of Oil Exploration, Drilling, Extraction, and Production in Territorial Seas

Proposes an amendment to section 7 (Natural resources and scenic beauty), Article II of the State Constitution to prohibit exploration, drilling, extraction, & production of oil beneath Florida waters between the mean high-water line & seaward limit of Florida's boundaries; exempts transportation of oil produced outside of such waters.

Arguments commonly used in support of drilling:

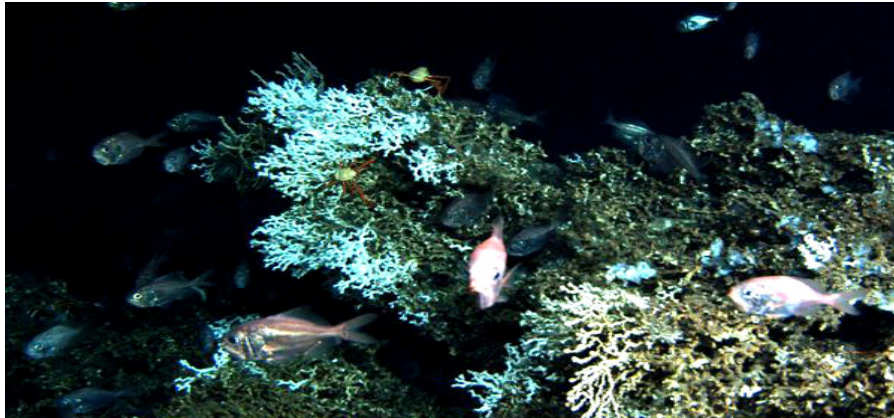
- It will boost the economy of the state of Florida and bring thousands of new jobs.
- It will decrease America's dependency on foreign oil.
- It will decrease gas prices at the pump.

Reasons these arguments are false:

- Oil companies will bring in mostly out-of-state contractors, since Florida isn't equipped with companies or equipment to do these jobs. Our economy is currently based on the fact that we have beautiful beaches and a healthy marine environment. Why jeopardize that?
- Drilling will not decrease dependency on foreign oil. If we were to lift the moratoriums in the Pacific, Atlantic, and eastern Gulf of Mexico combined, domestic oil production would only increase 1.6% between now and 2030.
- Gas prices at the pump will not decrease. Oil-producing states such as Louisiana and Texas have gas prices that are a mere 4-9 cents cheaper than Florida, whereas other oil-producers such as California and Alaska have higher prices. Also, the total amount of estimated reserves in Florida waters would only be enough to supply the nation for a week, and thus would have little effect on the market.

More reasons to support the ban on oil drilling:

- Oil companies currently have access to 5500 offshore leases, estimated to hold **68 billion** barrels of oil, that are not yet being drilled. Only 7 billion barrels are estimated to be recoverable in Atlantic federal waters, while in Florida, there is estimated to be only 236 million barrels, due to the fact that Florida's shelf is geologically different from the western gulf, and isn't as conducive to oil formation and capture. These two regions combined contain just a fraction of the resources that oil companies already have access to.
 - If oil were to be spilled >100 miles off the Florida coast, it would likely get pulled into the loop current. Deep-sea organisms may be affected, as they were following the Deepwater Horizon disaster. Deep-sea coral reefs and sponge fields that serve as vital habitat for commercially important species are not well-mapped or explored, so the extent of damage could be more severe than we could possibly predict.
 - Over its lifetime, a **single** rig can dump over 90,000 tons of drilling fluid/metal cuttings and drill 50-100 wells that **each** dump 25,000 pounds of toxic metals (lead, chromium, mercury)/carcinogens (toluene, benzene, xylene) into the ocean, and pollute the air as much as 7,000 cars driving 50 miles per day. Drill cuttings and heavy metals in drilling mud can persist on the sea floor for more than 5 years.
- For very little economic gain, we'd subject ourselves to huge potential economic (i.e. tourism, recreational fishing, commercial fishing) and environmental losses.**



A healthy coral outcropping observed in the Green Canyon area, almost 200 miles from the Deepwater Horizon site. Photos taken from October 14 to November 4, 2010, NOAA Gulf of Mexico coral exploration, Lophelia II cruise. Image credit: Lophelia II 2010, NOAA OER and BOEMRE



Most of these coral skeletons only 7 miles southwest of the BP Macondo well disaster are dead and covered by a brown, thick, substance that most likely is residue of the gushing oil combined with dispersant chemicals dumped into the Gulf. Image credit: Lophelia II 2010, NOAA OER and BOEMRE.