



CITY OF VIRGINIA BEACH AGENDA ITEM

ITEM: A Resolution Opposing Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration, Including Seismic Testing

MEETING DATE: June 20, 2017

■ **Background:** The City Council, in 2010, adopted a resolution supporting offshore oil and gas exploration with royalty payments to Atlantic Coast states. In 2015, several local business organizations and Council-appointed advisory agencies urged the City Council to oppose offshore oil and gas exploration, including the Resort Advisory Commission, the City's Green Ribbon Committee, the Virginia Aquarium Foundation, Lynnhaven River NOW, the Virginia Beach Hotel Association, and the Virginia Beach Restaurant Association. The Princess Anne Garden Club, the Virginia Beach Garden Club, the Sandbridge Civic League and the Resort Beach Civic League are also in opposition. These organizations oppose exploration offshore of the City's coastline due to the vulnerability of the coast and beaches to catastrophes that could adversely impact the City's tourism industry for decades.

In 2015, the City Council repealed its 2010 ordinance in support of offshore energy exploration and adopted a resolution which set forth a neutral position on offshore energy exploration. The Department of Defense has updated its 2010 findings on outer continental shelf oil and gas activities, noting new mission requirements, including expanded weapon and sensor footprints, and operational concerns in the Mid-Atlantic Planning Area that includes areas off of Virginia Beach's coastline. In late 2016, the Resort Advisory Commission reaffirmed its opposition to oil and gas exploration and also asked City Council to oppose seismic testing.

The tourism industry is vital to the City's economic prosperity, accounting for \$1.4 billion in annual tourism revenue, nearly 13,000 tourism-supported local jobs, and \$55 million in tourism-related taxes. A Deepwater Horizon-type incident could cripple the City's economy for decades.

■ **Considerations:** This resolution provides that City Council opposes offshore oil and gas exploration, including seismic testing, off of the City's pristine coastline.

■ **Public Information:** Public information will be provided through the normal Council agenda process.

■ **Attachment:** Resolution

Requested by Councilmember Uhrin, Mayor Sessoms, Vice Mayor Jones, and Councilmembers Davenport, Dyer, Henley, Wilson and Wood

REQUESTED BY COUNCILMEMBER UHRIN, MAYOR SESSOMS, VICE MAYOR JONES AND COUNCILMEMBERS DAVENPORT, DYER, HENLEY, WILSON AND WOOD

A RESOLUTION OPPOSING OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION, INCLUDING SEISMIC TESTING

1 WHEREAS, the City Council, in 2010, adopted a resolution supporting offshore
2 oil and gas exploration with royalty payments to Atlantic Coast states;
3

4 WHEREAS, in 2015, several local business organizations and Council-appointed
5 advisory agencies urged the City Council to oppose offshore oil and gas exploration,
6 including the Resort Advisory Commission, the City's Green Ribbon Committee, the
7 Virginia Aquarium Foundation, Lynnhaven River NOW, the Virginia Beach Hotel
8 Association, and the Virginia Beach Restaurant Association; the Princess Anne Garden
9 Club, the Virginia Beach Garden Club, the Sandbridge Civic League and the Resort
10 Beach Civic League also oppose offshore oil and gas exploration;
11

12 WHEREAS, these organizations oppose exploration offshore of the City's
13 coastline due to the vulnerability of the coast and beaches to catastrophes that could
14 adversely impact the City's tourism industry for decades;
15

16 WHEREAS, in 2015, the City Council repealed its 2010 ordinance in support of
17 offshore energy exploration and adopted a resolution which set forth a neutral position
18 on offshore energy exploration;
19

20 WHEREAS, the Department of Defense has updated its 2010 findings on outer
21 continental shelf oil and gas activities, noting new mission requirements, including
22 expanded weapon and sensor footprints, and operational concerns in the Mid-Atlantic
23 Planning Area that includes areas off of Virginia Beach's coastline;
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25 WHEREAS, in late 2016, the Resort Advisory Commission reaffirmed its
26 opposition to oil and gas exploration and also asked City Council to oppose seismic
27 testing;
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29 WHEREAS, the City highly values the United States Navy and other armed
30 forces that conduct activities off of the City's coastline;
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32 WHEREAS, the tourism industry is vital to the City's economic prosperity,
33 accounting for \$1.4 billion in annual tourism revenue, nearly 13,000 tourism-supported
34 local jobs, and \$55 million in tourism-related taxes;
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36 WHEREAS, for the good of all of our residents, the City of Virginia Beach must
37 continue to protect and build upon our status as one of the East Coast's premier resort
38 cities and a highly valued partner with the Navy;
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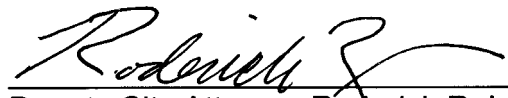
40 WHEREAS, the speculative benefit of oil and gas exploration and drilling is not
41 worth the risk of a Deepwater Horizon-type incident that could cripple the City's
42 economy for decades.

43
44 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY
45 OF VIRGINIA BEACH:

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47 That the City Council hereby opposes offshore oil and gas exploration, including
48 seismic testing, off of the City's pristine coastline.

Adopted by the Council of the City of Virginia Beach this ____ day of
_____, 2017.

APPROVED AS TO LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:



Deputy City Attorney Roderick R. Ingram
City Attorney's Office

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June 13, 2017