



Myrtle Beach took correct position on offshore drilling

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I was delighted to see Myrtle Beach City Council take a stand against offshore drilling this week.

Tuesday, Myrtle Beach became the 20th South Carolina city to go on record as opposing offshore drilling. While the decision was pretty much a no-brainer (who would vote against protecting the beaches from an oil spill), the position statement will provide a good bit of clout to the anti-drilling movement.

The Obama administration wants to open the waters off Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia to offshore oil and natural gas production beginning in 2017.

Interestingly, the majority of South Carolina's congressional delegation is on board with the plan. Rep. Tom Rice is a co-sponsor of a bill that would open the South Carolina coast to exploration and drilling of oil and natural gas.

The delegation has put the lure of big dollars ahead of the state's most precious resource, its environment.

At a forum in Florence, Rice said: "Let's do the seismic testing so we know what's there. Until we know what's there we can't make any rational decisions about it. Let's get our deal done with the federal government for the 37 percent royalties that the Gulf Coast states are getting on offshore oil recoveries. Thirty-seven percent royalties would put a lot of people to work in this state and build roads all over the place."

Gov. Nikki Haley supports the drilling plan as does the Grand Strand's representative in the S.C. House of Representatives Alan Clemmons.

“South Carolina taxpayers and our Palmetto State economy will be the winners when we finally have full access to these resources,” he said.

The promise of untold riches has apparently blinded these elected officials to the horror of an oil spill like the one that devastated the Gulf Coast in 2010.

Oil industry “experts” predict offshore drilling will create up to 45,000 jobs and pump \$2.7 billion into construction projects by 2035.

The state could earn more than a billion dollars in mineral lease payments and royalties plus \$163 million in taxes in 2035, according to proponents of offshore drilling.

These numbers contradict estimates by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management.

The BOEM estimates the Atlantic coast waters contain about 2.92 billion barrels of oil. Considering the United States consumes 6.8 billion barrels per year, the amount of oil taken offshore could only meet the nation’s demands for six months.

History has demonstrated off shore drilling is not entirely safe. I will never forget looking at televised footage of oil gushing from the bottom of the Gulf, nor the oil slicks that coated the area’s beaches.

I’m terrified by the prospect of oil washing up on the Grand Strand beaches and every politician serving this state should feel the same.

I’d like to see Surfside Beach, North Myrtle Beach, Conway, Loris, Aynor and Horry County join Myrtle Beach in opposing offshore drilling.

If Congressman Rice is truly concerned about the place he calls home, he should reconsider his position on offshore drilling.

No amount of money is worth the risk of killing the tourism goose that lays the golden egg for South Carolina.

I encourage our readers to call and write their elected officials and voice their opposition to offshore drilling.

http://www.myhorrynews.com/opinion/editorials/article_90b0f492-411e-11e5-9df9-6f0a62d112f4.html