



North Carolina Council of Churches

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Statement Opposing Offshore Drilling

Adopted by the North Carolina Council of Churches Governing Board on March 1, 2016

As people of faith, we proclaim our belief that our world is God's creation, that God sees it as good, and that it is ours to protect and maintain. We also recognize that the quality of life for all of us depends upon its health and well-being. As Governing Board members of the NC Council of Churches, we represent hundreds of thousands of North Carolinians, from many faith traditions, who share a common teaching: we are charged by our Creator with caring for creation (Genesis 1:28, 2:15), and are called to be faithful stewards of that which is entrusted to us (Luke 16:1-13).

Opening North Carolina's coast to offshore oil and gas drilling will threaten the health and well-being of our coastal communities and the worldwide environment. Offshore drilling poses a dire and immediate threat to the coastlands and inland estuaries, marshes, and waterways of the coast of North Carolina, and to the ecosystems of birds, shrimp, oysters, fish, and other life-forms. It also threatens the livelihoods of tens of thousands of North Carolinians who rely on a healthy coast in order to make a living. Fishing, tourism and recreation industries risk revenue losses in the billions due to spills and habitat destruction. There have been more than 40 major oil spills from offshore drilling since 1964, each one spewing at least 42,000 gallons of toxic waste into our oceans.

The Bible tells us "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein" (Psalm 24:1), and that God's wisdom and glory is seen in the teeming of life in the seas (Psalm 104:25).

Due to the symbiotic relationship between the Atlantic Ocean and the hardworking residents of North Carolina's coastal communities, offshore drilling jeopardizes an entire way of life for communities with vast economic, social, cultural, familial, and spiritual consequences.

We urge Christians everywhere to practice responsible stewardship of the environment and to work with government, industry, and others to cease the ravaging of the earth. We encourage persons, communities, industries, and governments to work together to protect what God loves and to safeguard the lives, livelihoods, health, and well-being of our neighbors and of future generations.

We believe that by numbers, geographic representation, and social influence, the faith communities of North Carolina have the potential to shift the state's priorities toward a more just and sustainable future. Toward that end, we both circulate this statement of concern and commitment, and also support our words with appropriate behavior. May our actions praise the Creator of the life whom we hereby honor, and may all creation be served by our efforts.