



Virginia Beach Hotel Association

May 7, 2015

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Honorable Mayor William D. Sessoms
Municipal Center
City Hall, Building #1
2401 Courthouse Drive
Virginia Beach, Virginia 23456

Dear Mayor Sessoms,

In recent months, the issue of offshore drilling along the coast of Virginia has come to the forefront of discussion within our community. After receiving numerous inquiries as to the VBHA's position on offshore drilling, our association educated ourselves on the pros and cons of the issue. We engaged the expertise of numerous elected officials, businessmen, lawyers, environmentalists and our own membership in pursuit of clarity on this contentious matter.

The Virginia Beach Hotel Association is tasked with supporting and advancing the local hospitality industry, as well as educating others on its incredible importance to the health of our community. With this mission in mind, our search for understanding focused chiefly on the benefit or harm that offshore drilling would pose to our hospitality community. We also weighed the effects such an industry would have on our local and state economy, as well as our environment.

On Monday, May 4, the Virginia Beach Hotel Association Board voted to oppose the pursuit of offshore drilling along the Virginia Coastline. We join in the skepticism expressed by more than forty other coastal communities from New Jersey to Florida.

Our decision was not reached lightly, as we understand the need to diversify our state's economy. Although diversification of our economy is of great importance, we cannot in good conscious support a potential industry if it in any way compromises the well-being of an already proven industry. The potential for environmental catastrophe, however slight, is far too great a liability to assume on such a beautiful asset we take for granted every day. Instead, our board is focused on promoting year-round visitation to our resort city, and supports all efforts to achieve that both successfully and safely.