

February 25, 2019,

The Honorable Representative Diaz-Balart & Secretary Bernhardt
8669 NW 36th St #100,
Doral, FL 33166

RE: Stop The Drill

Dear Representative Diaz-Balart and Secretary Bernhardt,

On behalf of the Friends of the Everglades, I am writing to express my serious concern with oil and gas drilling and exploration offshore Florida. The expansion of offshore drilling in the Atlantic Ocean poses a wholly unnecessary threat to our coastal communities, the good people who reside there, and the natural resources which sustain our way of life along the coast. The introduction of offshore drilling would also directly impact the Everglades, a natural resource and asset unlike anywhere else in the country. I urge you to continue to oppose the current administration's offshore drilling plan and protect our coastal waters from this dirty venture.

Bringing offshore drilling to our state could swiftly and permanently damage coastal resources that so many Floridians depend on for an income and way of life. Florida's Gulf and Atlantic waters support nearly 610,000 jobs and generate roughly \$37.4 billion in GDP, mainly through tourism, fishing, and recreation. These clean ocean industries provide steady jobs and revenue year after year, but only so long as beaches and coastal waters remain healthy and oil spill free.

The threat of another catastrophic spill like the 2010 BP *Deepwater Horizon* tragedy is too great to risk our existing coastal economies and abundant ocean resources. Oil spills have far reaching consequences, including enormous economic losses, human health impacts and lasting damage to marine ecosystems. Spreading slicks cost the Gulf coast roughly 10 million user-days of beach, fishing, and boating activity. Oiled waters in the Atlantic could have a cascade of effects on the wetland habitat, waterways and incredible wildlife throughout the Everglades.

The development of offshore drilling requires heavy industrialization along the coast in order to move, pump, and process oil from offshore rigs. Not only are these pipelines leaky, but also the addition of large scale oil refineries would dramatically alter the character of our coasts – transforming beach towns into places scattered with drilling infrastructure. This industrial traffic and build up would inevitably take a toll on the Everglades too – risking an irreplaceable natural resource.

One in every three Floridians relies on the Everglades for their water supply. Our communities cannot afford to bear the devastating effects of oil pollution that would come to our state with the expansion of offshore drilling. Florida's coastline and offshore waters have an unparalleled economic and environmental value for the entire state. There is no reason to invest in the dirty industry of offshore drilling when cleaner energy solutions are a feasible alternative. I urge you to continue to back your constituents in the fight to protect our coast and the Everglades from a future of drilling and spilling.

Sincerely,

Kymerly Hurchalla

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