

~ Proclamation ~

Whereas, U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) has issued incidental harassment permits to open the mid and south Atlantic planning areas to exploration and development of offshore oil and gas which will include the utilization of methods, such as seismic blasting; and

Whereas, the permits will result in activities which are injurious and harmful to marine life, including but not limited to dolphins, the endangered North Atlantic right whale and others; and

Whereas, as a result of the incidental harassment permits, the South Carolina Attorney General, the South Carolina Environmental Law Center, the South Carolina Environmental Law Project and sixteen South Carolina cities and towns have filed suit against the federal government challenging the permits; and

Whereas, in addition to South Carolina cities and towns which have sued the federal government challenging the incidental harassment permits, several South Carolina counties, cities and towns have expressed their opposition to offshore oil and gas drilling and seismic airgun blasting due to the harmful impacts to marine life, as well as to South Carolina residents, businesses and visitors; and

Whereas, exploratory and commercial drilling, extraction, and transportation of offshore oil and gas resources pose a significant risk of a spill as evidenced by the Deep Horizon oil spill among others; and

Whereas, the full impacts of seismic testing and offshore drilling in the Atlantic Ocean are not yet fully understood by scientists or the Federal Government and lower-impact alternative technologies may be available for exploration in the near future; and

Whereas, the vast majority of South Carolina ocean wealth stems from tourism and recreation which is supported through a healthy ocean. In fact, hundreds of thousands of jobs and billions of dollars of the state's gross

domestic product depend on clean and oil-free water, attractive beaches, and abundant fish and wildlife; and

Whereas, tourism is Beaufort County's primary economic engine and it depends on our natural coastal and historical environment, as well as fishing and water recreation, all of which are critical to the quality of life for Beaufort County residents; and

Whereas, Beaufort County endeavors to be a good steward of its coastal environment and natural resources. It appreciates that its community, businesses, and industries all depend on a healthy coastal environment not just for the quality of life and economic benefits derived from a robust tourism industry, but also for water recreation, fishing activities and industries which feed not just South Carolinians but residents of other states as well; and

Whereas, the South Carolina Senate recently passed a budget proviso which would effectively eliminate the ability of the oil and gas industry to locate necessary infrastructure onshore by a margin of 40-4 displaying overwhelming bipartisan opposition to offshore drilling.

Now, therefore, be it resolved, that Beaufort County Council hereby proclaims that offshore oil and gas drilling and exploration and seismic blasting pose unnecessary and harmful risks to Beaufort County's economy and to the ecological health and wellbeing of its citizens, oceans and lands; therefore, County Council opposes any plan or legislation which encourages exploration and development of offshore oil and gas and seismic blasting because these activities will negatively impact the health, safety and welfare of its citizens and the citizens of the State of South Carolina.

Dated this 13th day of May, 2019.



Stewart H. Rodman, Chairman
Beaufort County Council