

## Yet another ‘no’ to offshore drilling

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The South Carolina coast is virtually solid against offshore drilling, with Tuesday’s “no” vote by Myrtle Beach City Council. In the face of ever- growing local opposition, the continuing support of state leaders for a risky enterprise is ever more perplexing.

Myrtle Beach Council voted 6-1 against seismic testing for oil deposits offshore and for the drilling that could follow. The council, like its counterparts up and down the coast, recognizes the hazard of offshore oil drilling to the state’s booming tourism economy and its natural resources.

The Grand Strand wouldn’t be quite so grand with tar balls washing up on shore. And an oil spill would have disastrous consequences for coastal South Carolina.

Coastal “no” votes recognize that the normal operations of the oil industry are incompatible with coastal South Carolina. And seismic testing is incompatible with the well-being of whales and dolphins that abound in coastal waters.

Myrtle Beach is the 20th local jurisdiction in South Carolina to join the effort to stop offshore drilling before it starts. That number includes Hilton Head, Beaufort, Edisto Beach, Charleston County, Folly Beach, the city of Charleston, the Isle of Palms, Sullivan’s Island, McClellanville, Georgetown and Atlantic Beach. Even Columbia, though far inland, has joined in.

It is hard to recall a grassroots effort that has advanced a cause so rapidly.

So it is reasonable for coastal residents to ask why so many of those who represent them in Congress, the Legislature and the governor’s office aren’t opposing offshore drilling, too.

The only members of the state’s congressional delegation to oppose offshore drilling are 1st District Rep. Mark Sanford, a Republican, and 6th District Rep. Jim Clyburn, a Democrat.

Gov. Nikki Haley, so far a cheerleader for the drilling plan, should reconsider her position. State leaders should recognize that coastal residents have insight into the comparative value of offshore drilling vs. tourism.

Coastal communities understand the fundamental incompatibility of the oil industry with the thriving coastal environment.

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