

RESOLUTION IN OPPOSITION TO OFFSHORE EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION OF PETROLEUM RESOURCES ON THE CONTINENTAL SHELF OFF THE COAST OF NORTH CAROLINA

WHEREAS, the Town of Carrboro is committed to being a sound steward of the environment with the stated goal to “lead by example”; and

WHEREAS, in 2001, the Town of Carrboro joined the Cities for Climate Protection program and is committed to pursuing initiatives to decrease dependence on fossil fuels, implement energy efficiency, and expand the use of alternative energy sources; and

WHEREAS, the Carrboro Board of Aldermen has implemented energy efficiency and climate action initiatives, reducing municipal emissions and the Town’s carbon footprint; and

WHEREAS, in his February 2013 State of the State address, Governor McCrory reaffirmed his commitment to “immediate action to begin drilling off [the] Atlantic coast,” a commitment that calls for a strong response by North Carolina’s coastal communities, environmental conservation organizations, and all interested persons and businesses to stand firmly in opposition to this serious economic and environmental threat; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Carrboro stands with her sister coastal municipalities in their pursuit of shoreline protection and preservation; and

WHEREAS, exploratory and commercial drilling, extraction, and transportation of offshore oil and gas resources pose a significant risk of spill; and

WHEREAS, offshore drilling requires substantial onshore infrastructure, such as pipelines and/or refineries, which will further risk the health and safety the environment, character and natural beauty of North Carolina’s coast; and

WHEREAS, it is known that the 20 counties that comprise North Carolina’s coastal region generate more commercial and personal income, public revenues, and employment opportunities than the petroleum and natural gas industry is estimated to generate for the State, specifically,

1. In 2013 a record \$20.2 billion in domestic visitor/tourism spending was realized in North Carolina; and
2. Out of the 100 counties in the State of North Carolina, in terms of travel expenditures, three of the top 10 counties, in 2012, are coastal counties; and
3. Direct tourism employment in North Carolina is approximately 197,700 persons, with direct tourism payroll of \$4.6 billion; and
4. Visitors to North Carolina generated more than \$3 billion in federal, state and local taxes in 2013; and
5. The National Marine Fisheries Service reported fish landings in 2012 in North Carolina to be worth \$72,905,625; and
6. Because of North Carolina’s tourism industry, each North Carolina household saves \$435 in state and local taxes as a direct result of visitor spending in the state; and

WHEREAS, in 2013, Dr. Mike Walden, William Neal Reynolds Professor of Agriculture and Resource Economics study, “The Economic Potential from Developing North Carolina’s Onshore and Offshore Energy Resources” found that offshore drilling would generate \$181 million in annual income, over a seven-year build up period; and

WHEREAS, were North Carolina to pursue the industrialization of the oceans beyond the first seven years, over a 30- year period estimates suggest that offshore drilling would generate \$1.9 billion in income annually, a fraction of the 2013 record \$20.2 billion in domestic visitor and tourism dollars spent on the North Carolina coast; and

WHEREAS, visitors from all over the world come to enjoy the natural beauty of our clean beaches, salt and freshwater marshes, inlets, estuaries and tributaries; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina is rich in natural areas that provide sanctuary, nesting and breeding grounds for diverse groups of migratory birds, turtles, dolphin, whales, fish and other wildlife; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina’s coastal waters and natural habitats provide the world with some of the best wild-caught seafood, renowned for its freshness and exceptional quality; and

WHEREAS, the inherent risks to North Carolina’s 320 miles of valued coastline from offshore oil and natural gas exploration and drilling have the potential to irrevocably harm our natural environment, our economic well-being and our overall quality of life, evidenced by considering just two massive oil spills in waters contiguous to the United States:

1. The Exxon Valdez in 1989, which leaked 10.8 million gallons of crude oil into Prince William Sound, causing \$300 million dollars in environmental damage, and causing 32,000 water and fisher people, who made their living mostly on commercial fishing, economic harm, and reduced tourism by 35 percent in southwest Alaska in the year after the spill; and
2. The Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, which leaked 205.8 million gallons of crude oil, contaminating 1,100 linear miles of coastline, and causing damage and impact to both the seafood industry and tourism from Louisiana to Florida, across four states; and

WHEREAS, in 2010, in response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill event in the Gulf of Mexico, the North Carolina Legislature and Governor ratified Senate Bill S836, to protect North Carolina waters and coastline with the Oil Spill Liability, Response and Preparedness Act which:

1. Clarifies liability for damages caused by the discharge of natural gas, oil or drilling waste into state coastal fishing waters or offshore waters;
2. Provide for the review of information required for a proposed offshore fossil fuel facility in order to determine consistency with state guidelines for the coastal area;
3. Direct the Coastal Resources Commission to review existing laws and regulations that pertain to offshore energy exploration and production in light of the explosion, sinking and subsequent discharge of oil from the British Petroleum Deepwater Horizon offshore drilling rig;

4. Direct the Department of Crime Control and Public Safety to immediately review and update the state oil spill contingency plan in order to prepare the state in the event that oil discharged from the British Petroleum Deepwater Horizon offshore drilling rig is transported by currents or other mechanisms to the North Carolina coast.
5. Direct the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to review limitations on recovery by the state for damage to public resources and for the cost of oil or other hazardous substance cleanup established pursuant to G.S. 143-215.89; and

WHEREAS, it stands to reason that as the state of North Carolina has determined and legislated that it is necessary to the safety, health and welfare of the state to protect our coast from oil exploration and production generated in the Gulf of Mexico, further, it should protect and preserve her coastline and adjoining continental shelf from petroleum exploration and production; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Carrboro Board of Aldermen is opposed to the exploration and production of petroleum resources on the continental shelf or elsewhere off the coast of North Carolina; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Board of Aldermen stands in solidarity with North Carolina coastal communities and communities who may be affected by the onshore infrastructure supporting offshore exploration and drilling and who may suffer long-term social, economic and environmental impacts from offshore exploration and production of petroleum resources on the continental shelf off the coast of North Carolina.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Board of Aldermen calls upon all North Carolina municipal and county governing bodies of North Carolina to pass similar resolutions to this one and that the Triangle J Council of Governments and the League of Municipalities join in this effort.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Board of Aldermen urges Governor McCrory and the entire North Carolina General Assembly to oppose offshore petroleum production policies that risk the health, safety and sound environmental stewardship of North Carolina's coastline whose natural beauty attracts a proven tourism-driven economy.