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Senate panel OKs drilling off Florida's coastline

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS • JUNE 9, 2009

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WASHINGTON — A Senate committee has approved opening the eastern Gulf of Mexico to oil and gas drilling within 10 miles of the Florida Panhandle and within 45 miles of the rest of the state's coastline.

The provision was tacked onto a broader energy bill by a vote of 13-10 today in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

The eastern Gulf waters were singled out for protection against drilling by Congress in 2006 as part of a deal that made available 8.3 million acres (3.36 million hectares) for drilling in the east-central Gulf.

Sen. Bill Nelson said that oil and gas development in the eastern Gulf would interfere with military training in the area. And the Florida Democrat vowed to filibuster the energy legislation and block its approval if the provision is not removed.

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The City of Sanibel is located on a sanctuary island with a protected ecosystem in the Gulf of Mexico; and

WHEREAS:

The Sanibel City Council strongly opposes any new and additional oil and gas leases in the Gulf of Mexico of the State of Florida; and

WHEREAS:

The Sanibel City Council strongly supports the bi-partisan efforts of Florida Senators Mel Martinez and Bill Nelson, Congressman Connie Mack and twenty-one members of Florida's Congressional delegation that oppose drilling closer to Florida; and

WHEREAS:

Sanibel City Council is strongly supportive of maintaining the current offshore drilling moratorium to protect our marine ecosystems and supports making the Congressional leasing moratorium permanent; and

WHEREAS:

The Sanibel City Council is committed to protecting the quality of the water that surrounds our Island by keeping it free from potentially harmful offshore oil rigs, especially in light of the recent damaging hurricanes that have swept through the Gulf of Mexico; and

WHEREAS:

The Sanibel City Council is dedicated to preserving the quality of water that impacts our environment from unsightly oil rigs; and

WHEREAS:

The Sanibel City Council is opposed to any efforts that result in a weakening of Florida's right to protect our coastlines and offer federal funds for new oil and gas leases in the Gulf of Mexico; and

NOW, THEREFORE,

I, Carla Brooks Johnston, Mayor of the City of Sanibel, Lee County, Florida on behalf of the members of the City Council am opposed to any new oil and gas leases in the Gulf of Mexico and support a permanent moratorium on offshore drilling which will impact the quality of water in the Gulf of Mexico.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF _____

CITY OF SANIBEL
RESOLUTION NO. 01- 26

A RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE ISSUANCE OF NEW OIL AND GAS LEASES ASSOCIATED WITH OFFSHORE DRILLING ACTIVITIES IN THE GULF OF MEXICO.

WHEREAS, the City of Sanibel is a model pro-active conservation community; and

WHEREAS, Sanibel is dependent upon coastal tourism, fishing, and shelling as well as other shoreline recreational activities; and

WHEREAS, the negative economic aspects of offshore drilling will have a profound impact on Sanibel as well as all of Florida; and

WHEREAS, offshore drilling activities will have negative effects on Sanibel including adverse impacts on air and water quality, nearby shoreline industrialization and public safety in addition to wildlife damage associated with oil spills and current inadequate cleanup methods.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Sanibel, Lee County, Florida:

SECTION 1. The City of Sanibel urges the Secretary of the Interior, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the United States Congress to continue protection of the offshore waters of Florida by refusing to permit new oil and gas leasing and development in the Gulf of Mexico.

SECTION 2. Effective date.

This resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

DULY PASSED AND ENACTED by the Council of the City of Sanibel, Lee County,

Florida, this 15th day of May, 2001.

AUTHENTICATION:

Udo Theiss
Mayor

[Signature]
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

[Signature]
City Attorney

5/17/01
Date

Vote of Council members:

| | |
|---------|-----|
| Theiss | aye |
| Walsh | aye |
| Harrity | aye |
| Brown | aye |
| Workman | aye |

Date filed with City Clerk: May 17, 2001