



The Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce

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The Honorable Beverly Perdue
Governor
State of North Carolina
via electronic mail

The Honorable Thom Tillis
Speaker of the House
North Carolina House of Representatives
via electronic mail

The Honorable Phil Berger
President Pro Tempore
North Carolina Senate
via electronic mail

For more than 15 years, the Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce has, and continues, to oppose offshore drilling for oil and natural gas.

The potential environmental and economic impacts of a spill, or other mishap, could have catastrophic consequences for tourism and fishing.

Offshore of the Outer Banks are two unique features - the Continental Shelf, and the colliding of two currents - the Labrador and the Gulf Stream. An oil spill would not only impact the Outer Banks, but the two currents could take the oil both north and south along the coast.

In its most recent estimate of damages paid for the Gulf oil spill last year, British Petroleum expects to pay out \$40.9 billion. The taxed property in Dare County alone is valued at \$16.8 billion and that doesn't include over 80% of the land area in Dare County in public ownership. Add up the value of coastal properties from the Virginia to South Carolina borders and the number is overwhelming. Why would anyone want to put those properties at risk?

The North Carolina Department of Commerce recently reported that North Carolina was the sixth most visited state in 2010, accounting for \$17 billion in tourism spending. Visitors to Dare County alone spent approximately \$357 million on lodging and \$188 million on prepared food and these numbers represent just one of 20 coastal counties. North Carolina can ill afford to risk losing those kinds of revenues. Investment property owners who receive revenues from rentals live all over the state. Any decrease in that investment income will be felt in communities throughout North Carolina.

The push to form a compact with Virginia and South Carolina so that North Carolina will get its fair share of lease revenues and gain thousands of long-term jobs is misguided. These concerns are exacerbated by the fact that the existing and proposed federal leasing program does not reflect the assertions made by the proponents of opening up the North Carolina coast. According to the report issued by the North Carolina legislative Offshore Study Committee, there is no available revenue sharing to the local communities or the state of North Carolina whom jointly share the risks previously mentioned. Furthermore, the idea that North Carolina would be the benefactor of increased jobs is inherently false. In the same report, the conclusion was made that the most likely port of operations would be Norfolk, VA based on their existing infrastructure, availability of skilled labor, and the connection to heavy rail. The jobs then would most naturally fall to Virginia.

Potential benefits to the coast of North Carolina are few -if any - but the risks and associated impacts could be devastating.

We strongly urge the General Assembly to abandon this idea and stand firm in opposing offshore drilling.

Adopted this 14th day of June, 2011.



Robin A. Mann, Chair
Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce
Board of Directors

cc: Sen. Stan White
Rep. Tim Spear
Rep. Bill Owens
Dare County BOC
Currituck County BOC
Hyde County BOC