

# *Protect Florida's Beaches*

## From Oil Drilling in Coastal Waters



*The oil drums are pounding. Make sure your voice is heard over the din.*

Public opposition to nearshore oil drilling was so intense that Florida's Senate refused to take up a proposal offered late in the 2009 legislative session by lobbyists for Texas oil companies. But once again Florida faces the dangers of oil drilling by its proponents in both the Florida House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. For the benefit of the oil industry, they are risking the future of Florida's economy and environment.

**Oil drilling would risk what Florida already has and what Florida has the potential to achieve.**

### Florida's Economy Is Dependent on Its Coastal Waters:

Florida has the 4th largest economy in the country. And let's be honest, that wealth is derived from our waters and beaches. Tourism is the backbone of Florida's economy, and healthy tourism in Florida is dependent upon clean, blue waters and white, pristine beaches. *Oil does not mix well with either.*

- Florida's coastal economy generates **\$562 billion** a year.
- Florida's ocean economy generates **\$25 billion**, which grew \$2 billion between 2003 and 2005.
- Florida's ocean economy provides over **half a million jobs** and contributes **\$13 billion in wages**.
- Florida's tourism industry is valued at **\$62 billion with 950,000 jobs**.
- Florida's coastal properties were valued at **\$181 billion**, with **\$2 billion a year in property taxes**.

*David Mica, director of the Florida Petroleum Council, was asked by the St. Pete Times about offshore drilling safety. His response was, "There are no guarantees."*



### Drilling Is Not Safe; the Risk Is Too High:

In the days after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, oil industry reps. said that not a single drop of oil was spilled. In reality, the two hurricanes alone had a devastating effect on the industry, all to the detriment of the environment and the region's economy.

- **115 platforms were destroyed** (with 52 others damaged),
- **535 pipeline segments damaged**,
- **5146 separate spills** were reported, (146 medium or major),
- **Over nine million gallons (214,286 barrels)** spilled in total.

### Do You Know How Much It Costs to Clean Up an Oil Spill?:

The average cost of an oil spill clean-up in the U.S. is \$26,000/ton. That price is over **\$140,000/ton** in spills where less than 100 bbls. (34 tons) spill. The majority of spills are small. It's economy of scale in reverse. **Lots of little spills and leaks cost massive amounts of money.** A big spill will shut down our beaches. Little spills and leaks will drain our coffers, at a time when the budget is already emaciated.

*The EPA documents that "There is as great as a 47% chance that the slick would reach Florida's coastal waters before dissipating," when speaking on a likely spill.*



*Former Gov. Jeb Bush: Opposing oil drilling “is clearly the environmentally and economically rational choice for Florida.”*

*People don't come to Florida for oil. They come for the beaches and for recreation.*

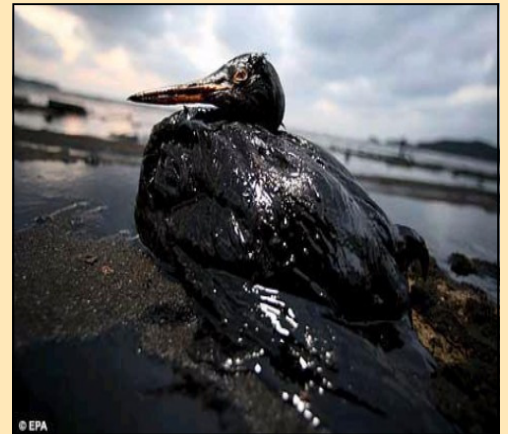
**Recreational Fishing and Wildlife Viewing Economics:**

Florida’s coastlines are essential habitat for all types of wildlife. Offshore drilling and the pollution it creates pose a direct threat to Florida’s beaches, coastal wetlands, estuaries, and coastal parks. Clean, healthy coastlines are a necessity for Florida’s economy and provide Florida billions of dollars in tourism.

- In 2006, 3.3 million Floridians viewed wildlife and 1.6 million Floridians and tourists traveled around Florida for the sole purpose of wildlife viewing.
- Wildlife viewers generated more than **\$3 billion in total economic impact** throughout Florida. Retail sales account for approximately \$1.8 billion of this total.
- Recreational saltwater anglers and coastal resource users **pump \$16.7 billion into the state.**
- Florida is the **number one destination** in the U.S. for outdoor recreation.
- State parks alone account for \$1 billion economic impact throughout the state.

**Oil Drilling’s Environmental Impacts Would Be Devastating to Florida’s Economy:**

At each stage of testing, exploration, and production, oil drilling produces contaminated water, uses toxic drilling muds, and periodically spills oil and toxic liquids into the ocean. **Pollutants like mercury and persistent hydrocarbons contaminate fish and sea life near platforms and massive spills kill seabirds, sea turtles, fish and marine mammals.** Even with the newest technologies, oil companies still legally pollute by dumping drilling muds, cuttings, produced waters, drainage and workover fluids into the water daily. These toxic wastes contain heavy metals, carcinogens, radioactive material and more. The industry can legally dump water-based drilling fluids that contain **thousands of pounds of mercury.**



**Oil Is Neither Profitable Nor Healthy for Florida’s Economy and Environment:**



Oil drilling proponents are asserting that opening Florida’s waters to drilling would provide a financial “boon” of just over \$2 billion a year. That number pales in comparison to what Florida already generates. Florida’s coastal economy is a powerhouse at \$562 billion with a growing ocean economy of \$25 billion. The foundation of Florida’s economy would be in grave risk. And for what? A \$2 billion “windfall”? What the oil industry won’t freely admit is that this paltry sum would be exhausted in spill clean-up costs and in mitigating negative environmental impacts. When you factor in lost tourism revenue, decreased

coastal property values (i.e. lost property tax revenue), reduced commercial fishing earnings, decreased recreational retail sales, increased health dangers, long-term pollution of environmental resources, and degradation of critical wildlife habitat, Florida would be paying to shoot itself in the foot. Our only gain would be pennies at the gas pump and in truth the U.S. Department of Energy is dubious even of that.

*Billions lost in overall economic output for pennies saved at the pump? Would you vote for that?*