



TOWN OF NAGS HEAD RESOLUTION OPPOSING SEISMIC TESTING AND OFFSHORE OIL EXPLORATION AND DRILLING OFF NORTH CAROLINA'S COAST

WHEREAS, the Town of Nags Head is located on North Carolina's environmentally-sensitive Outer Banks, and

WHEREAS, the Outer Banks' lack of industrial development and proximity to critical habitats such as Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge and Cape Hatteras National Seashore help make our area truly unique; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina has a higher diversity of marine mammals than anywhere along the east coast of the United States OR the Gulf of Mexico; and

WHEREAS, our clean water, low density development, and abundant open spaces attract visitors to our area, generating over \$102 million in state and local tax revenues annually; and

WHEREAS, tourism, based on our unspoiled environment, is our area's primary economy, employing one in three Dare County citizens and providing 13,160 jobs; and

WHEREAS, Dare County, with \$1.1 billion in domestic travelers' expenditures, is number 4 in the state in visitor spending, providing 5% of North Carolina's travel income; and

WHEREAS, coastal tourism in North Carolina (\$3 billion) already exceeds the mid-level projections for oil and gas almost 20 years from now, as reported in a 2014 paper by Timothy Considine, Distinguished Professor of Energy Economics at the University of Wyoming; and

WHEREAS, these projections are contingent on the actual quantities of oil and gas off-shore, as well as actual prices of these resources; and

WHEREAS, our commercial and recreational anglers rely on clean water for some of the world's best wild-caught seafood, renowned for its freshness and exceptional quality; and

WHEREAS, in addition to tourism and commercial and recreational fishing, many of Dare County's natural areas provide sanctuary and nesting/breeding grounds for diverse groups of migratory birds, turtles, whales, fish and other forms of wildlife; and

WHEREAS, according to U.S. House of Representatives subcommittee testimony given by Dr. Douglas Nowacek, Distinguished Professor in the Nicholas School of the Environment and the Pratt School of Engineering at Duke University in July 2015, air gun blasting used in seismic testing generates the most intense sounds that humans put into the ocean, short of explosives; and

WHEREAS, moving forward with blasting in the Atlantic Ocean, according to Nowacek, will expose ocean animals to noise levels that are likely to cause impacts and to disrupt essential behavior patterns; and

WHEREAS, the inherent risks to our region from offshore oil and natural gas exploration and drilling have the potential to irrevocably harm our natural environment, our economic wellbeing, and our overall quality of life, proven by considering just two massive oil spills in waters contiguous to the United States:

- The Exxon Valdez in 1989, which leaked 10.8 million gallons of crude oil into Prince William Sound, resulted in \$300 million dollars in environmental damage, reduced tourism by 35 percent in southwest Alaska in the year after the spill, and caused 32,000 watermen, who made their living mostly on commercial fishing, great economic harm.

- The Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, which leaked 205.8 million gallons of crude oil, contaminated 1,100 linear miles of coastline and caused a net negative impact on tourism across Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi and Florida. In addition to the actual physical environmental damage triggered by the oil spill, the *perception* of damage and negative impacts on leisure activities and the seafood industries resulted in greater harm to tourism.

WHEREAS, as reported in a March 24, 2014 NOAA article, crude oil causes developmental abnormalities in marine fish; and

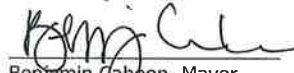
WHEREAS, the NRDC's June 2015 summary of the impacts of the Deep Horizon oil spill disaster states that nearly 1 million coastal and offshore seabirds were killed and more than 1,000 sea turtles were found dead after the disaster; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Nags Head's Board of Commissioners have remained steadfast in their opposition to seismic testing and offshore drilling, previously adopting seven resolutions since 1989 and providing numerous comments to various government agencies since 2006.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Town of Nags Head continues to be opposed to seismic testing and offshore oil exploration and drilling off the coast of North Carolina and requests that its strong opposition to future leasing off the coast of North Carolina through all stages of development of the 2019-2024 Draft Proposed National Oil and Gas Leasing Program be considered.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we also request that no further action related to seismic testing and oil exploration or drilling take place in the Atlantic Ocean off North Carolina's coast.

ADOPTED THIS 7th DAY OF FEBRUARY 2018, by the Town of Nags Head Board of Commissioners.


Benjamin Cahoon, Mayor
Town of Nags Head

ATTEST:


Carolyn F. Morris, Town Clerk

