

**NORTH CAROLINA COASTAL RESOURCES COMMISSION RESOLUTION
TO PROTECT THE NORTH CAROLINA COAST FROM HARM CAUSED BY OFFSHORE ENERGY
EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION**

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Coastal Resources Commission was established in 1975 as part of a cooperative coastal area management program between local and state governments to protect North Carolina's valuable coastal lands and waters through a comprehensive plan for the protection, preservation, orderly development, and management of the coastal area of North Carolina. The members of the Commission are charged with serving and acting on the Commission solely for the best interest of the public and public trust and shall bring their particular knowledge and experience to the Commission; AND

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Coastal Resources Commission provides periodic reports to the North Carolina General Assembly on development of a unified system of environmental and land use permits in the 20 coastal counties; AND

WHEREAS, one of the duties of the Coastal Resources Commission is to identify all critical areas in need of protection or preservation, and designate them as Areas of Environmental Concern and to insure the orderly and balanced use and preservation of our coastal resources on behalf of the people of North Carolina and the nation; AND

WHEREAS, the physical, esthetic, cultural, and recreational qualities of the natural shorelines and the clean waters of the coastal counties of North Carolina attract visitors to North Carolina providing our State economy with multi-billion dollars in annual spending; AND

WHEREAS, the waters of the Gulf Stream and the North Atlantic current meet off the coast of North Carolina and create some of the most biologically rich areas for marine life because of the strong currents that meet off this area of the east coast of the United States; AND

WHEREAS, the coast of North Carolina is widely known as the Graveyard of the Atlantic in areas of North Carolina due to centuries of shipwrecks; AND

WHEREAS, our pristine coastal waters contribute to a strong recreational and commercial fishing economy for North Carolina and provide wild seafood renowned for its freshness and exceptional quality; AND

WHEREAS, in addition to tourism, commercial and recreational fishing, many of our State's waters provide sanctuary and nesting/breeding grounds for endangered, threatened, and other species such as turtles, whales, dolphin, fish, plankton, and other forms of wildlife; 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 to birds, sea turtles and other animals and coastal resources, the *perception* of damage and negative impacts on leisure activities and the seafood industries resulted in great harm to tourism.

WHEREAS, numerous scientific studies raise concerns about the adverse impacts of seismic testing on marine mammals, fisheries resources and plankton; AND

WHEREAS, the Coastal Resources Commission is charged by the legislature with considering alternatives to developing offshore fossil fuel resources in order to minimize the likelihood of an unauthorized discharges and adverse impacts on coastal resources, including marine, estuarine, and wildlife resources.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Coastal Resources Commission is opposed to offshore oil and gas 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.

ADOPTED THIS 18th DAY OF APRIL 2019, by the North Carolina Coastal Resources Commission.

M. RENÉE CAHOON, Chair
Coastal Resources Commission