

RESOLUTION NO. 223 -2008

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS OF MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA,
SUPPORTING EFFORTS TO PROTECT FLORIDA
FROM OFFSHORE DRILLING AND EXPLORATION**

WHEREAS, Florida's coral reefs, mangroves, seagrasses, beaches, fisheries, endangered species, tourism and quality of life depend upon clean ocean waters; the impacts of drilling muds and spills caused by offshore oil development can be carried by great distances by the Gulf Loop Current onto Florida's coasts; routine drilling muds release thousands of pounds of toxic chemicals into the environment, harm fish, corals and marine mammals, and place Florida at risk of a large or catastrophic spill; and

WHEREAS, historically considered and managed as isolated environments, recent discoveries have documented important biological linkages between these underwater communities that are maintained by the clockwise motion of the Yucatan Loop and Florida currents; individual reef and banks, some of which are connected by bathymetric ridges and scarps, provide a nearly-continuous corridor from Belize and Mexico, then into the Gulf itself; even though separated by large expanses of ocean water, the fishes, corals, and invertebrates common to these reefs and banks demonstrate that the health and vitality of resources downstream are linked closely to those located upstream, and they are dependent on one another for the continued biological recruitment and replenishment of the biota; and

WHEREAS, Floridians and especially residents of the Florida Keys have been unified in their opposition to offshore oil drilling and exploration for many years; and

WHEREAS, the area south of 26 degrees North Latitude, approximately where Marco Island, Florida, lies, and all waters outside of Lease Sale 181, are under a Congressional moratorium for oil and natural gas exploration and development, thanks to years of past efforts; and

WHEREAS, the effort to open Florida up to oil drilling began with the Interior Department removing Florida's jurisdiction and giving Louisiana authority over Lease Sale 181, via publication of a revised "Seaward Boundary Lines Extension" in the *Federal Register* in January of 2006, that occurred without public review or comment; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Interior Department's Five Year Plan for Oil and Gas Development and Exploration undermines current protections for Florida's coral reefs; and

WHEREAS, the President recently rescinded his father's executive withdrawals that currently protect Florida from offshore oil at a time when our coral reefs are endangered and need more, not less, protection to survive; and

WHEREAS, Florida Senators Mel Martinez (R) and Bill Nelson (D) have worked diligently to make permanent the drilling moratorium in the eastern Gulf of Mexico, including most of Lease Sale 181, to keep drilling as far as 260 miles off Florida's west coast and 150 miles off the Panhandle and the east coast; and

WHEREAS, the eastern Gulf is a military training zone and in which drilling should be banned as well as a buffer alongside it for at least five years; and

WHEREAS, as more threats to bring oil drilling closer to Florida's shores emerge in Washington;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA:

1. We support the strongest possible protection for Florida and other fragile marine environments from the impacts of offshore oil and gas exploration and development, including additional efforts to expand exclusionary zones, extension of Presidential and Congressional moratoria, and defeat of legislation to open up our coast to offshore oil.
2. We encourage the Interior Department Minerals Management Service, our Florida Congressmen and Florida Governor Charlie Crist to work in support of these goals.
3. We oppose oil drilling near Florida; we oppose any new offshore oil and gas leasing, exploration, drilling activity and seismic inventories affecting Florida's coast and support new Congressional moratoria against offshore oil drilling near Florida and other fragile coastal areas; and we encourage extension of the Presidential Executive Order that bans leasing off America's east and west coasts and parts of Alaska from 2012 to 2020.
4. We support a permanent cancellation of the 90+ existing and active leases, some as close as 11 miles from our coast, compensating the holders of those leases through rents due and royalty forgiveness for other current drilling activity, and canceling any activity in Lease Sale 181 and establishment of a 150 mile buffer zone against drilling on Florida's east coast.
5. The Clerk shall send a copy of this resolution to:
 - a. **Renee Orr**, 5-Year Program Manager, Minerals Management Service (MS-4010), Room 3120, 381 Elden Street, Herndon, Virginia 20170
 - b. **Honorable Senator Bill Nelson**, 716 Senate Hart Office Building, Washington, DC 20510
 - c. **Honorable Senator Mel Martinez**; 317 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510
 - d. **Honorable Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen**, 2160 Rayburn Building, Washington, DC 20515
 - e. **Governor Charlie Crist**, The Capitol, Tallahassee, Florida 32301.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of County Commissioners of Monroe County, Florida, at a regular meeting of said Board held on the 28th day of July, 2008.

Mayor Mario Di Gennaro	<u>Yes</u>
Mayor Pro Tem Charles "Sonny" McCoy	<u>Yes</u>
Commissioner Sylvia Murphy	<u>Yes</u>
Commissioner George Neugent	<u>Yes</u>
Commissioner Dixie M. Spehar	<u>Yes</u>



(SEAL)
Attest: **DANNY L. KOLHAGE**, Clerk

By Daniel C. De Santis
Deputy Clerk

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA**

By Mario Di Gennaro
Mayor Mario Di Gennaro

FILED FOR RECORD
2008 JUL 30 PM 1:24
DANNY L. KOLHAGE
CLERK
MONROE COUNTY, FLA.

MONROE COUNTY ATTORNEY
APPROVED AS TO FORM:
Suzanne A. Hutton
SUZANNE A. HUTTON
COUNTY ATTORNEY

Date 7/25/08