



# PUBLIC POLICY

## OFFSHORE DRILLING

### ACTION NEEDED:

Urge Congress to **SUPPORT** the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006 (GOMESA), which bans oil and gas leasing within 125 miles off Florida's Gulf Coast until 2022. **SUPPORT** keeping Florida's east coast free from offshore drilling and maintaining the Department of Interior's commitment to remove Florida from consideration in the next draft of the proposed leasing plan.

Urge Congress to **OPPOSE** any legislation that moves the ban to an earlier date.

### BACKGROUND:

The Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006 (GOMESA) bans oil and gas leasing in the majority of the Eastern Gulf of Mexico Planning Area (EPA) and portions of the Central Gulf of Mexico Planning Area (CPA) until 2022. Specifically, oil and gas leasing activities are banned in areas of the EPA that are within 125 miles of Florida, and areas within the CPA that are within 100 miles of Florida (*see below map for details*). FAC supports extending the ban indefinitely.

Generally, state coastal waters extend three miles a state's coastline; Florida's west coast is an exception, where the state has jurisdiction over waters extending nine miles from the coast. Florida statute (s. 377.242(1)(2)(5.), F.S.) currently prohibits drilling for, or production of, oil, gas, or other petroleum products in state coastal waters.

The federal government has jurisdiction over territorial waters beyond state waters. While significant oil exploration and drilling has taken place in the Gulf of Mexico since the 1930s, these activities have taken place primarily in the western and central areas of the Gulf of Mexico. Concerns over the impacts of increased drilling in the eastern Gulf of Mexico on military training and weapons testing activities led to the passage of GOMESA, which sets a moratorium on drilling in the EPA until 2022.

In recent years, bills have been filed, unsuccessfully, in the House of Representatives to roll back the GOMESA moratorium and to reduce the area subject to the moratorium. Additionally, in April 2017, President Trump signed an executive order aimed at expanding offshore drilling in the Arctic and Atlantic Oceans and directing the Secretary of the Interior to review the schedule of proposed oil and gas lease sales in certain federal waters, including the central Gulf of Mexico; the order does not include the eastern Gulf of Mexico.





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## UPDATE:

Several bills have been filed and heard addressing the issue of drilling offshore of U.S. coastlines, including:

[H.R. 1941](#)—Coastal and Marine Economies Protection Act

- Sponsor: Congressman Joe Cunningham (D-South Carolina)
- Prohibits offering any tract for oil and gas leasing or preleasing

[H.R. 205](#)—Protecting and Securing Florida's Coastline Act of 2019

- Sponsor: Congressman Francis Rooney (R-Florida)
- Permanently extends the moratorium on oil and gas leasing, preleasing, and related activities in certain areas of the Gulf of Mexico

[S.13](#)—Florida Shores Protection and Fairness Act

- Sponsor: Senator Marco Rubio (R-Florida)
- Extends moratorium on oil and gas leasing in certain areas of the Gulf of Mexico to 6/30/2027

## FLORIDA IMPACT:

In addition to the potential impacts on military activities, offshore drilling threatens Florida's beaches, coastlines, commercial and recreational fishing, and marine species, all of which are major economic drivers for the state.

