



Opposing Offshore Oil & Gas Drilling nccoast.org/offshoreoilfactsheet

BACKGROUND

Offshore oil and gas drilling poses serious threats to North Carolina's coastal economy and environment. The waters off North Carolina should be off-limits to these destructive processes.

The state has jurisdiction of offshore waters within three miles of its shores. The federal government has jurisdiction of waters beginning three miles offshore and extending to 200 miles off the coast. This area is known as the U.S. Economic Exclusive Zone. Anything past 200 miles are considered international waters. Currently, the draft 2019-2024 National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program does not contain a buffer zone for oil rigs, so drilling could theoretically occur within just a few miles of North Carolina's coastline.

MYTHS & MISCONCEPTIONS

There are many myths and misconceptions about offshore drilling. You only need to look at the damage done by the Deepwater and Santa Barbara spills to see the harm offshore drilling will cause to our coastal communities and economy. Below, some of the most frequently misunderstood concerns about offshore drilling are addressed.

MYTH: North Carolina will receive significant revenues from oil and gas drilling.

FACT: It would take a new law passed by the U.S. Congress. The Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act, a federal revenue sharing program, has benefitted Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama since 2006. It still exists today despite President Trump's repeal of the program in his proposed budget¹ for the 2018 fiscal year. Without the revenue sharing, the Gulf States would lose \$3.56 billion through fiscal year 2027.

MYTH: Drilling off our coast will lower the price of gasoline.

FACT: According to a 2009 study by the U.S. Energy Information Agency (EIA)², opening up all offshore areas (Pacific, Atlantic, as well as eastern and central Gulf) to oil and gas drilling would not significantly lower gas prices. If all of these areas were opened, gasoline would be 3 cents cheaper at the pump, in 2030.

¹ "Trump budget kills offshore oil revenue sharing for Louisiana, other Gulf states"
http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2017/05/trump_budget_kills_offshore_oi.html

² Annual Energy Outlook, 2009, With Projections to 2030. [http://www.eia.gov/oiaf/archive/aeo09/pdf/0383\(2009\).pdf](http://www.eia.gov/oiaf/archive/aeo09/pdf/0383(2009).pdf)



MYTH: We need to become energy independent.

FACT: The amount of oil and gas estimated to exist off our coast is just a small portion of the global energy market. According to a 2011³ study done by the state of North Carolina, the Carolina Trough (south of Cape Hatteras) has a potential to fulfill our country's demands for just 36 days of oil and 246 days of natural gas. Working toward eliminating our dependence on foreign oil by reducing energy consumption is the best method for moving toward energy independence.

MYTH: Our state will add 30,000 jobs from the drilling industry.

FACT: Based upon the American Petroleum Institute (API) study,⁵ the offshore oil and gas industry in North Carolina estimates the potential to provide up to 30,000 jobs.

However, this study fails to reference the fluctuation of the oil markets⁵. Countering this number is the fact that in 2016, the North Carolina tourism economy directly provided more than 218,000 jobs. North Carolina's coastal tourism economy is valued at \$3 billion, and the state has a \$95 million commercial fishing industry. The potential risk of job loss in tourism, fishing and other industries that depend on a clean coastal environment far outweighs potential economic benefit of oil and gas industry jobs, many of which are specialized positions and will be hired from out of state.

Furthermore, the infrastructure needed for offshore oil drilling would change the character of the North Carolina coast. People visit this state's beaches because of its clean waters and beautiful scenery. An industrialized coastline would permanently change coastal communities and economies. A spill would have an even worse effect. It would take years and millions of dollars to clean up the damage caused by a spill. The total cost of the Deepwater Horizon spill cleanup was \$65 billion, which is triple the amount of North Carolina's annual budget.

MYTH: Coastal communities think offshore oil drilling is a good thing.

FACT: More than 140 communities on the East Coast have passed resolutions against offshore oil drilling. More than 30 of these are in North Carolina. Many local businesses and chambers of commerce are against offshore oil drilling because of the risks the industry poses to tourism. Opposing offshore oil drilling is a bipartisan issue, and coastal residents have overwhelmingly spoken out against it at public meetings.

Additionally, offshore oil and gas exploration activities could interfere with military use. The Department of Defense in 2010 and 2015 expressed concern about offshore drilling negatively affecting military training.

For more information:

- Southern Environmental Law Center created an interactive map on the issue. [Click here.](#)
- nccoast.org/oil
- dontdrillnc.org

³ "Report of the Governor's Scientific Advisory Panel On Offshore Energy. 2011."
<http://www.nccommerce.com/Portals/14/Documents/OffshoreEnergy/12-13-2011%20Offshore%20Energy%20REPORT%20FINAL.pdf>

⁴ William Brown, Chief Environmental Officer, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. March 9, 2015.
<http://www.boem.gov/BOEM-Science-Note-March-2015/>

⁵ http://www.caesarrodney.org/pdfs/East_Coast_Energy_Study_FINAL.pdf