

City of St. Augustine



St. Augustine, Florida
Nation's Oldest City

City Commission

1565 – 2015
450 years

April 15, 2014

Mr. Gary D. Goeke, Chief
Regional Assessment Section
Office of Environment (MS5410)
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region
1201 Elmwood Park Blvd.
New Orleans, LA 70123-2394

RE: Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. Goeke:

Please accept this letter addressing the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) that was prepared to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of geological and geophysical survey activities in Federal waters of the Mid and South Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) and adjacent State waters for the 2012-2020 time period. The City of St. Augustine has a vested interest in any activity approved in the South Atlantic OCS which would potentially impact the waters and beaches in and surrounding our city and county.

The City of St. Augustine is requesting that BOEM deny the geological and geophysical survey applications, deny any application for oil or gas drilling in the Atlantic Ocean, in or near the shorelines of St. Augustine/St. Johns County. We also request that you extend the comment period for the PEIS by an additional 30 days.

The City of St. Augustine opposes oil and gas drilling in the Atlantic Ocean as well. We know that the damage caused by oil spills occurs along the coasts and major rivers of the United States on a near daily basis. The City's economy is largely based on tourism and on recreational and commercial finishing; and a spill of any sort, whether large or small, would greatly affect the aforementioned industries.

Attached is Resolution 2014-12 opposing the seismic air gun testing in the Atlantic Ocean; and Resolution 2010-10 opposing approval of oil drilling in Florida's waters in areas other than those already approved for oil leasing and oil exploration. Thank you for your consideration of our statement of objection to the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. Our ocean waters are inextricably bound to our residents and businesses way of life.

Sincerely,

Vice Mayor/Commissioner
City of St. Augustine

RESOLUTION NO. 2010-10

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA
OPPOSING THE APPROVAL OF OIL DRILLING IN FLORIDA'S
WATERS IN AREAS OTHER THAN THOSE ALREADY APPROVED
FOR OIL LEASING AND OIL EXPLORATION.**

WHEREAS, Florida's economy depends on its multi-billion dollar tourism industry, which resulted in more than 82 million visitors coming to Florida in 2008 during which period tourism generated over \$4.0 billion in taxable sales; and

WHEREAS, tourism accounts for one-third of Florida's budget revenue and 96% of those visitors cite the beaches as an influential factor in their decision to visit Florida; and

WHEREAS, tax revenues generated from Florida's growing tourism industry are critical to continued funding of essential governmental services, including transportation, schools and public safety; and

WHEREAS, the testing and training ranges of the eastern Gulf of Mexico are a unique and irreplaceable national security asset that provides critical live-fire testing and training opportunities that are incompatible with mineral exploration and extraction; and

WHEREAS, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration is located off the east coast of Florida and its operations include launching missions with the strong peaceful purposes in the exploration of space off the east coast of Florida; and

WHEREAS, the coasts of Florida have the potential for the great risk of environmental damage; and

WHEREAS, environmental specialists contend the major risk from drilling platforms is the wastewater they routinely discharge which contains drilling fluids and heavy metals including mercury; and

WHEREAS, according to oil industry data, an oil rig off the coast of Florida could dump up to 90,000 tons of drilling fluid and metal cuttings over its lifetime. These contaminants accumulate in the marine food web and may contaminate local beaches and have a negative effect on the environment and the tourism industry; and

WHEREAS, it is our belief that despite technological advances in oil drilling technology, there is no positive assurance that catastrophic damage to our coastline and beaches and plant and fish life could be avoided during normal operating conditions or during storm situations; and

WHEREAS, lifting the moratorium on mineral leasing in the Gulf of Mexico and or allowing mineral leasing off the east coast of Florida poses an intolerable threat to our beaches and waterways and to the economy of Florida and national security.

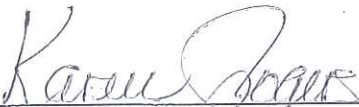
WHEREAS, the City Commission of the City of St. Augustine Florida supports further development of non-fossil fuel energy sources, such as solar and wind energy, etc.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA, AS FOLLOWS:

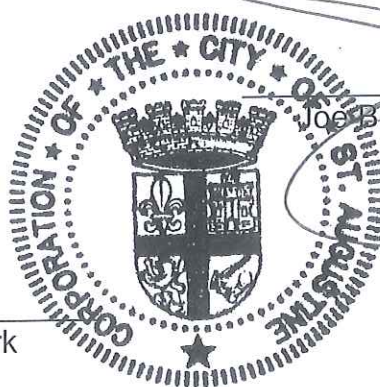
That the City of St. Augustine strongly encourages all elected officials at the county, state and federal levels to oppose legislative attempts to expand offshore oil drilling past the areas already approved for pre-leasing, leasing and oil production activities and to take immediate steps to encourage and assist in the development of alternative sources of energy.

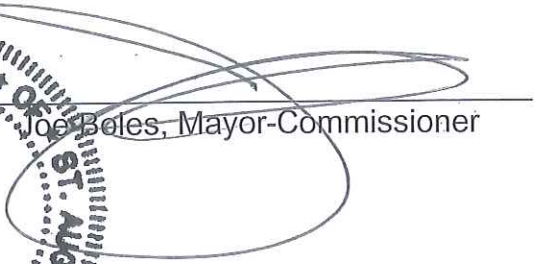
ADOPTED in Regular Session of the City Commission for the City of St. Augustine, Florida this 10th day of May, 2010.

ATTEST:


Karen Rogers, CMC, City Clerk

(SEAL)




Joe Boles, Mayor-Commissioner

RESOLUTION NO. 2014-12

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE
CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA OPPOSING SEISMIC
AIR GUN TESTING IN THE ATLANTIC OCEAN.**

WHEREAS, the United States Department of the Interior has endorsed seismic testing in Atlantic Ocean waters, a first step toward allowing oil and gas drilling from Delaware Bay to Cape Canaveral; and

WHEREAS, the proposed seismic testing would use air guns firing intense blasts of compressed air over extended time periods and could prove harmful to or injure and kill marine mammals and fish; and

WHEREAS, the City of St. Augustine recognizes that tourism related to a healthy and vibrant coastal environment serves as a major economic force benefiting the residents, property owners and visitors of the City; and

WHEREAS, the City of St. Augustine understands that conclusions as to the full impact of the effects of seismic testing and the options for mitigation of these impacts require additional research;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA, AS FOLLOWS:**

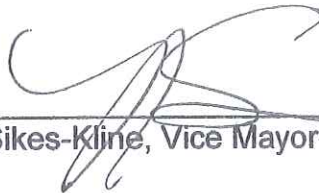
That the City of St. Augustine stands opposed to seismic testing in Atlantic Ocean waters until the complete evaluation of all testing options and the implementation of all proper assurances for protection of marine life.

ADOPTED in Regular Session of the City Commission for the City of St.

Augustine, Florida, this 14th day of April, 2014.

ATTEST:


Alison Ratkovic, City Clerk



Nancy Sikes-Kline, Vice Mayor-Commissioner

(SEAL)

