

## **RESOLUTION 2018-05**

### **RESOLUTION IN OPPOSITION TO SEISMIC TESTING AND OIL & GAS EXPLORATION OFF NORTH CAROLINA SHORES**

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) is currently in the process of trying to open the Atlantic Coast to exploration and development of offshore oil and gas which will include the utilization of methods such as seismic blasting and,

**WHEREAS**, the full impact of seismic blasting in the Atlantic Ocean and its effect on marine mammals, highly migratory fish and other marine life is not yet fully understood by scientists, the oil and gas industry, BOEM, or the Federal Government, and lower impact technologies may be available and,

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Town Council of the Town of Oriental acknowledge the importance of their role as environmental stewards.

**WHEREAS**, the environment surrounding the Town of Oriental is a haven for a wide array of wildlife, including nearly 200 species of birds, dolphins, alligators, deer, bear and an amazing variety of fish.

**WHEREAS**, the Town's pristine shoreline provides a community for vacationers, tourists and residents to enjoy beautiful, natural, and scenic vistas.

**WHEREAS**, the BOEM has developed the 2017-2022 Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Leasing Program Draft Proposed Program (DPP).

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Oriental raised the question of offshore drilling at their January 25, 2018 and February 6, 2018 meetings and discovered the majority oppose oil and gas exploration (drilling) activities off North Carolina shores adjacent to the Pamlico Sound.

**WHEREAS**, at the February 6, 2018, Town of Oriental Council Meeting, a motion was unanimously passed opposing seismic testing and oil and gas exploration offshore.

**WHEREAS**, it is our position that oil and gas exploration and drilling will negatively impact our commercial fishing industry, property values of homes located in the Town of Oriental, reduce the revenue received from tourism and damage the sensitive ecology of our region.

**WHEREAS**, there is concern among businesses and property owners with experience and devotion to conserving marine life that the noise required for seismic exploration may startle, impair and/or drive away sea life from offshore water essential to our local fishing industry.

**WHEREAS**, according to a recent study by North Carolina State University Professor Dr. Michael Walden, the potential annual average on-shore costs from possible environmental damage could reduce property values in affected counties by between \$636 million and \$4.7 billion.

**WHEREAS**, removing North Carolina from consideration of oil/gas activities could be of great value in sustaining property values not just to the benefit the Town of Oriental property owners but also to support the viability of many of Pamlico County's services.

**WHEREAS**, Eastern North Carolina's most important economic activity is tourism. The state's beaches are vital recreational, economic and ecological treasures, generating an estimated \$3 billion in revenue each year and directly supporting approximately 40,000 jobs in coastal area communities.

**WHEREAS**, visitor spending is crucial to the sustainability of the Town of Oriental, helping subsidize amenities and services that are utilized by year-round property owners. The accumulation of oil in the waters of the Pamlico Sound will most certainly cause a decline in the number of vacationers who visit the Town, rent homes, dine at local restaurants and patronize local businesses, which will be devastating to this community.

**WHEREAS**, our sensitive coast provides a haven not only for vacationing families, but also local wildlife. Long-term toxic effects of oil/gas drilling activities can impair reproductive success for marine mammals, sea birds, fish, shellfish and other critical sea life, which has a ripple effect on our coastal economy and ecology.

**WHEREAS**, on February 20, 2015, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) issued a proposal to designate portions of the East Coast as critical habitat for North Atlantic Right Whales, and a portion of this area overlaps the area being considered as the Mid-Atlantic Planning Area for oil/gas exploration.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** the Town of Oriental is opposed to the current BOEM Proposal for seismic testing off the coast of North Carolina for the purpose of oil and gas exploration and development;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Town of Oriental in solidarity with North Carolina coastal communities and with other communities that may be affected by seismic testing and oil and gas exploration; and,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Town of Oriental calls upon Governor Roy Cooper, Department of Environmental Quality Secretary Michael S. Regan and the North Carolina General Assembly to protect North Carolina's beautiful shores and North Carolina's proven tourism driven coastal economy by opposing seismic testing and oil and gas exploration.

Approved this 6th day of February, 2018 by the Mayor and Commissioners of the Town of Oriental

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Sally Belangia, Mayor  
Town of Oriental

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Diane H. Miller, MPA, Clerk/Manager