



Press Release

August 18, 2014

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Center opposes proposed leasing for offshore oil and gas in the Southeast Offshore oil and gas would endanger Georgia's coast with oil pollution and added climate heating.

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Depending on a federal decision, Georgia may be joining the Gulf States in facing the destructive consequences of offshore oil-drilling and exploration.

The Center issued strong objections to the proposal, now under federal government review, because of an array of prolonged and intensifying risks related to energy development in offshore areas along various U.S. coastlines, including the Southeast.

The federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) issued notice of the proposed lease-sale in portions of the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) not previously available for energy exploration and development. BOEM officials will be considering various opinions on the proposal submitted by the public, following a comment period that ended August 15.

The Center's objections fall into two main areas of serious concern: (1) the lack of adequate assurances that would prevent and sufficiently control any accidents, such as the catastrophic 2010 BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico that caused extensive and lasting damage to marine life, the fishing industry (sport and commercial), and coastal areas, and (2) the unacceptably destructive consequences of prolonging and worsening man-made climate disturbances – such as rising sea-level, flooding and severe storms – that will harm coastal areas worldwide, including Georgia.

The Center's executive director, David Kyler explained, saying "Any reasonably objective person can readily grasp why offshore oil-drilling along our coast is a profoundly bad idea. There is utterly no doubt that such activities will impose unacceptable risks to Georgians – brought by a combination of inevitable oil spills and the prospects of emitting millions of tons of carbon and methane into the atmosphere."

"The economy and quality of life in coastal Georgia are vitally dependent on our environmental quality, which is vulnerable to damage caused by these polluting industrial operations, both onshore and off," said the Center's board president, Steve Willis of Savannah. "For instance, the use of high-intensity seismic 'blasting' in the search to find offshore fossil fuels is very harmful to marine life, including endangered species. This extremely damaging process is intended to be conducted in the same areas already approved for equally damaging Navy high-intensity sonar testing and training – with no consideration of what the cumulative impacts on irreplaceable marine life will be." Willis concluded.

Learn more about the issue on the Center's Facebook page [<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Center-for-a-Sustainable-Coast/141003446180>] and on the BOEM website [<http://www.boem.gov/Five-Year-Program-2017-2022/>].