**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO MEMORIALIZE THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS AND URGE THE MEMBERS TO PROHIBIT SEISMIC SURVEYS OR OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS DRILLING OFF THE COAST OF SOUTH CAROLINA, AND TO JOIN THE MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN PROTECTING THE BEAUTIFUL BEACHES, SEA ISLANDS, AND ESTUARIES OF THE STATE FROM THE INEVITABLE POLLUTION OF THE AIR AND SEA IF SEISMIC SURVEYS OR OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS DRILLING IS ALLOWED TO TAKE PLACE OFF OF SOUTH CAROLINA, RESULTING IN A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE QUALITY OF LIFE ALONG OUR COAST AND A DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON THE TOURISM INDUSTRY OF THE STATE.

Whereas, the General Assembly recognizes the importance of oil exploration, yet recognizes there must be a balance between such exploration and the protection of the health, safety, welfare, and property of this state’s citizens; and

Whereas, the State of South Carolina is known for, and blessed with, miles of seashore including picturesque beaches, sea islands, and estuaries such as the ACE Basin National Wildlife Refuge; Kiawah Island with its ten miles of pristine beaches and approximately ten thousand acres of natural woodlands; Sullivan’s Island and other barrier islands and beaches of Charleston, which provide a respite from the hustle and bustle of the number one tourist destination in the United States and number two in the world; Folly Beach, perhaps the most easy‑going beach on the East Coast, with the best surfing spots imaginable; Edisto Beach with its gentle Southern charm, like stepping back in time to enjoy the sand and surf as it was meant to be; the Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge; the state preserves of South Island and Hobcaw Barony; and the Grand Strand beaches and estuaries of Georgetown and Horry counties, with their rich history like no other coastal area providing family entertainment and lodging, and hosting nearly eighteen million visitors last year alone; and

Whereas, to a small state like South Carolina, tourism revenue is vital to its continued health. And, it was recently announced that tourism in South Carolina is at least a twenty billion dollar industry. South Carolina’s coastal areas and the ongoing investment in those areas have provided significant economic impact; and

Whereas, activities including, but not limited to, seismic surveys and oil and gas drilling conducted off the coast and along shorelines of the State will impact tourism along our beaches and negatively impact the economic vitality of the State through loss of jobs, capital investment, income, and irreplaceable contributions to the state’s tax base; and

Whereas, if the State goes down this path and allows seismic surveys and offshore oil and gas drilling, there are too many known risks as well to justify any potential gain. South Carolina does not have the necessary infrastructure in place to handle the potential ramifications that may result from seismic surveys and offshore oil and gas drilling, and can ill afford to take its chances on the effects that could linger long into the future when the State is dependent on its tourism revenue. The state’s coastline is not conducive to support the type of infrastructure that would need to be placed on our beaches, nor do we have a stretch of strand that is undeveloped or coastal land that is unprotected; and

Whereas, the question is where would we go, which beaches, sea islands, or estuaries would we sacrifice? It would be careless for our State to sacrifice and jeopardize our beaches and lovely coastline for a resource that as a nation we currently experience a surplus of, and continue to be less dependent upon, due to advances in technology; and

Whereas, we have reached the conclusion after lengthy testimony from representatives of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management that the process for seismic surveying and offshore oil and gas drilling is problematic on many levels. This process creates a domino effect and the State of South Carolina simply cannot support a system that allows for drilling oil and gas because, as we now know, you cannot allow for one without the other. We also were educated in the fact that information obtained through seismic surveys is proprietary in nature and is only shared with the bureau; the State would have nothing to learn by allowing for seismic surveys when we are not allowed access to the data collected; and

Whereas, according to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, from 1964 through 2015, there were two thousand four hundred and forty‑one offshore oil platform spills in the waters of the United States, resulting in 5.2 billion barrels of oil in the water and on beaches, causing severe environmental and economic damages to coastal states and communities; and

Whereas, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management’s offshore oil platform spill data proves there is substantial risk to our state’s coastal environment and economy if offshore drilling is allowed because there is no drilling technology that can prevent oil spills. It is inevitable that oil spills will occur off of our State and cause great harm to our environment and the coastal economy; and

Whereas, all of this state’s coastal counties and municipalities have gone on record, with the passage of resolutions, opposing seismic surveys and offshore oil and gas drilling off of this State out of concern for the great harm these activities would have on the coastal environment and economy; and

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina General Assembly ask the United States Congress to acknowledge the very real concerns of a state such as this and help us preserve the legacy and nature of these beaches, sea islands, and estuaries that are like no other in the United States, each so distinctly different from the others, all to be enjoyed year after year by locals and visitors alike. We ask for mindfulness of the concerns raised regarding the potentially harmful impacts on our state’s precious natural resources, vital tourism industry, and unique quality of life; and we ask for help in preserving the past, continuing to enjoy the present, and building upon the future of these national treasure beaches in South Carolina. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

That members of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, by this resolution, memorialize the United States Congress and urge the members to prohibit seismic surveys or offshore oil and gas drilling off of the coast of South Carolina, and join the members of the South Carolina General Assembly in protecting the beautiful beaches, sea islands, and estuaries of the State from the inevitable pollution of the air and sea if seismic surveys or offshore oil and gas drilling is allowed to take place off of South Carolina resulting in a negative impact on the quality of life along our coast and a detrimental effect on the tourism industry of the State.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution must be forwarded to each member of the South Carolina Congressional Delegation.

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