



Contact: Steven Birnholz
(813) 229-1775
Cell: (813) 326-0822
sbirnholz@fc100.org

Florida Council of 100 Calls For Quick End to Special Session; Endorses Deliberate Legislative Action to Help Economy

TAMPA, Fla. (July 16, 2010) – Noting that current Florida law already prohibits the issuance of a permit to drill a well in search of oil on state-owned submerged lands, the Florida Council of 100 today adopted a resolution calling for an expedited Special Session next week, so that state policymakers can get back to the more pressing issue of how to restore and fortify Florida's economy in the wake of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

“Rather than using precious time and taxpayer dollars to redo what’s already been done, our leaders need to be focusing on finding ways to help hard-working Floridians regain the livelihoods stolen from them by this tragic accident,” said Susan Story, Chair of the Florida Council of 100. “Our key sectors of tourism and fishing are hurting, and when they suffer, all Floridians pay the price.”

As an alternative to the upcoming Special Session, the Florida Council of 100's resolution endorses the initiative sponsored by House Speaker Larry Cretul and Senate President Jeff Atwater for the House and the Senate to jointly conduct a thorough and detailed analysis of the economic impacts of the oil spill as a prelude to the development of optimal solutions for mitigating such impacts.

“The Florida Council of 100 has always championed the need for data-driven policymaking,” stated Steve Halverson, Council Vice Chair. “The Legislature’s plan to deliberately study the effects of the spill before developing alternatives for action is the best way to ensure our economic prosperity and protect our high quality of life.’

The resolution adopted today by the Florida Council of 100 is as follows:

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS,

On April 20, 2010, the oil drilling rig Deepwater Horizon exploded, creating a breach that would spawn the worst environmental incident in U.S. history, ultimately spilling more than 200 million gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico.

WHEREAS,

Said oil is contaminating, and is being perceived to be contaminating, Florida's Panhandle beaches and nearby offshore waters.

WHEREAS,

Said oil might soon be contaminating, or be perceived to be contaminating, other Florida beaches and offshore waters.

WHEREAS,

Said contamination, and the perception of said contamination, is both directly and indirectly harming Florida's economy, especially its vital tourism and fishing industries.

WHEREAS,

On July 8, 2010, Governor Charlie Crist invoked his powers under article III, section 3(c)(1) of the Florida Constitution and section 11.011, Florida Statutes, to call a Special Session of the Legislature of the State of Florida for July 20-23, 2010, for the sole and exclusive purposes of (1) considering the passage of a joint resolution to revise the Florida Constitution to prohibit the exploration for, the drilling for, the extraction of and the production of oil beneath all Florida waters located between the mean high water line along the coastline of Florida and the seaward limit of Florida's boundaries; and (2) placing that proposed revision on the November 2, 2010 ballot.

WHEREAS,

Article X, Section 11 of the Florida Constitution already prevents Florida's Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund from leasing sovereign submerged lands for oil and gas development if it is determined to be contrary to the public interest, thus mitigating the need for said Special Session of the Florida Legislature.

WHEREAS,

Section 377.24, Florida Statutes, already prohibits the Florida Department of Environmental Protection from issuing a permit to drill a well in search of oil or gas on state-owned submerged lands within the territorial waters of the state, thus further mitigating the need for said Special Session of the Florida Legislature.

WHEREAS,

Said Special Session of the Florida Legislature is estimated to cost Florida taxpayers approximately \$50,000 per day.

WHEREAS,

Data regarding the economic impacts, and potential economic impacts, of the Deepwater Horizon incident are still preliminary in nature.

WHEREAS,

It is imperative that a thorough and detailed analysis of those impacts be conducted as a prelude to the development of optimal solutions for mitigating such impacts.

WHEREAS,

On July 15, 2010, the President of the Florida Senate and the Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives pledged to collaboratively conduct such an analysis and, upon its completion, call a Special Session of the Florida Legislature to adopt appropriate,

targeted legislation that will help Florida's economy recover from the Deepwater Horizon incident and mitigate future harm.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

The Florida Council of 100 calls on the Florida Legislature to adjourn sine die on July 20, 2010, as soon as possible after acknowledging receipt of Governor Charlie Crist's Special Session proclamation.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED

The Florida Council of 100 commends the Florida Legislature for its measured, analytical approach to dealing with the effects of the Deepwater Horizon incident and pledges its continued support for legislative efforts to improve Florida's economy and create a high quality of life for all Floridians.

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Formed in 1961, The Florida Council of 100, which consists of business, government and academic leaders, serves as an advisory council to the Governor and focuses on public policy that enhances the quality of life and economic well-being of all Floridians. Visit www.fc100.org.