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SINK, GELBER, KRISEMAN, FITZGERALD PROPOSE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT THAT PROTECTS FLORIDA'S COASTLINE

Proposed constitutional amendment empowers voters to ban oilrigs from lining Florida's beaches

Miami, FL— Joining together from coast to coast, CFO Alex Sink, State Senator Dan Gelber (D-Miami Beach), and State Representatives Keith Fitzgerald (D-Sarasota) and Rick Kriseman (D-St. Petersburg) called on Governor Charlie Crist to reconvene the legislature for a special session to consider a constitutional amendment that would ban drilling off of Florida's beaches. Hosting press conferences in Miami and St. Petersburg, the three lawmakers released proposed legislation they intend to file should the legislature be called into special session.

"I have seen the BP oil spill up close, spreading for miles. This evidence proves that near beach drilling in Florida is a disastrous idea -- we must never let oil companies drill just three miles off our beaches," said **Florida CFO Alex Sink**. "Last year, oil companies spent millions on lobbyists and a PR spin machine and quickly passed near beach drilling through the Florida House. The people of Florida must send Legislators a message that we will not allow Florida's economy to be put at risk or forget the painful lessons of this historic spill. It is for these times of crisis that the Governor has the power to call the legislature back to Tallahassee, and I hope Governor Crist will do so immediately to take up this important amendment to ban near beach drilling. This special session should also tackle the urgent economic and environmental issues which may result from this disastrous oil spill, such as making absolutely sure that BP will pay for every last dime of this cleanup and income lost by our businesses."

"The tragedy in the Gulf of Mexico and the growing impact to Florida's coastline and economic engine underscores the need for some in the legislature to drop the issue of oil drilling entirely," said **State Sen. Dan Gelber (D-Miami Beach)**. "Florida's fragile coastline and its beautiful beaches are the backbone of our multi-billion-dollar tourism industry. Shortsighted fixes to meet today's energy demands are a real threat to Florida's most unique economic and environmental asset. We need a united front to fight the big oil interests who want to open the waters around our state to drilling."

"Now is the right time to settle, once and for all, the question of whether or not to drill in our waters," said **State Representative Keith Fitzgerald (D-Sarasota)**. "The events of the past few days have strengthened my resolve that the answer is no. This is exactly the right time to propose a constitutional amendment that will end drilling off our shores and protect Florida's beautiful coastlines for future generations."

“Even with a horrific and historic environmental and economic disaster unfolding before our eyes, Republican Leadership in Tallahassee refuses to drop their plans to drill just a few miles off our coast,” **said State Rep. Rick Kriseman (D-St. Petersburg)**. “We can no longer wait on them to put an end to this ridiculous oil drilling debate. We can no longer allow them to steer our state's energy agenda.”

The proposed constitutional amendment offered by lawmakers will:

- Allow voters to decide if the Florida Constitution should be amended to include a prohibition on drilling for oil or natural gas off Florida’s coast.
- Send a clear message to the oil industry of what Florida residents think about proposals to open more areas off our coast to oil drilling. The amendment takes the decision away from the oil executives and places it with the people of Florida.
- Preserves our beaches and coast by reducing the chance that the pollution associated with drilling will destroy Florida’s pristine coastline.

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