



Florida House of Representatives
Democratic Office

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Democratic Leader

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**FLORIDA HOUSE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS MEMBERS
STANDING FIRM TO KEEP FLORIDA WATERS SAFE**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. -- Florida House Democratic Caucus members have remained steadfast for more than a year in raising concerns about drilling in Florida's waters. In contrast, some high-profile Florida Republican officials appear to be reversing their support for near-shore drilling now that a mammoth oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico threatens environmental havoc and harm to multi-billion-dollar tourism and seafood industries.

Last week, Democratic state Representatives Keith Fitzgerald (D-Sarasota) and Rick Kriseman (D-St. Petersburg) called on Florida Republican leaders to end Florida's oil drilling debate. They urged Republican Speaker-designate Dean Cannon and other Republican leaders to halt to all consideration of oil drilling in state waters, just 3 to 10 miles off Florida's coasts.

Today, Florida House Democratic Leader Franklin Sands (D-Weston) joined their request. "I am truly hopeful that the oil spill will be contained and no harm comes to our state," said Sands. "Regardless, this potential crisis offers a lesson in why it is vitally important that Republican leaders begin to work more closely with Democratic Caucus members and share our vision on important policy matters."

Among other releases, the following statements were issued by the Florida House

Democratic Office roughly a year ago:

On April 27, 2009:

BIG OIL VICTORY REVERSES BAN ON DRILLING IN FLORIDA WATERS

Pandering to Big Oil, Florida House Republicans overwhelmingly voted today to reverse a 19-year-old ban on drilling in state waters and to open Florida's coastline to oil and natural gas exploration. The proposal would allow the Governor and Cabinet to negotiate with oil and natural gas companies to drill between 3 and 10.3 miles off Florida's coastline. House Bill 1219 surfaced in the Florida Legislature in the waning days of the session and failed to receive appropriate hearings in House committees and councils. **Democratic Caucus members overwhelmingly opposed the measure, noting the possibility of oil derricks cluttering the coast and oil spills potentially polluting Florida's beaches and the Everglades.**

On April 22, 2009:

DEMOCRATIC LEADER FRANKLIN SANDS

SEEKS HALT TO HOUSE REPUBLICAN NEAR-SHORE OIL DRILLING PLAN

Amid today's Earth Day celebrations, Florida House Democratic Leader Franklin Sands (D-Weston) called on House Republican leaders to take urgent action on important environmental legislation and to halt their controversial oil-drilling proposal. **"Instead of allowing oil drilling closer to Florida's shores as House Republican leaders have proposed, Florida should be a leader in the production and use of renewable energy,"** said Leader Sands. "I am deeply concerned by House Republican efforts to lift the state's decades-old ban on drilling, which could bring working oil rigs to within 3 miles of our shoreline...Florida's economy relies heavily on beach-going tourists, and we cannot afford the inherent risks associated with this near-shore drilling proposal."

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