



TOWN OF FAIRFAX

STAFF REPORT

November 4, 2020

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Garrett Toy, Town Manager

SUBJECT: Adopt a Resolution Opposing Offshore Oil and Gas Drilling and Exploration Activities, Including Seismic Airgun Blasting

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt the Resolution Opposing Offshore Oil and Gas Drilling and Exploration Activities, Including Seismic Airgun Blasting.

DISCUSSION

Mayor Goddard asked that this item be added to the agenda for the Council's consideration.

FISCAL IMPACT

n/a

ATTACHMENT

Resolution

RESOLUTION 20-__

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF FAIRFAX OPPOSING OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS DRILLING AND EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING SEISMIC AIRGUN BLASTING

WHEREAS, in California hundreds of thousands of jobs and billions of dollars of the state's gross domestic product depend on clean water, oil-free beaches, and abundant fish and wildlife; and

WHEREAS, the vast majority of California's ocean wealth stems from our tourism and recreation sector which benefits from a healthy ocean and coast; and

WHEREAS, offshore oil and gas drilling and exploration places coastal communities at economic and ecological risk from oil spills and the pollution brought by routine drilling operations and onshore industrialization, threatening the livelihoods of commercial and recreational fisherman and small businesses that rely on tourism and clean and healthy ocean and beaches; and

WHEREAS, offshore drilling may require significant onshore infrastructure, such as pipelines or refineries, which would harm the character of California's coastline, contribute to the loss of coastal habitats that provide natural mitigation against coastal hazards, such as wetlands; and

WHEREAS, offshore drilling and exploration perpetuates our ties to greenhouse gas pollution and contributes to climate change and the resulting sea level rise, extreme weather, seawater intrusion, and storm surge; and

WHEREAS, the harmful impacts from offshore oil and gas drilling and exploration anywhere along the California coastline could extend far beyond immediately surrounding areas and severely impact communities that rely on the robust economy of the marine industry; and

WHEREAS, the current administration has expressed interest in opening the Pacific Ocean to offshore oil and gas drilling and exploration, which includes the use of seismic airguns which fire intense blasts of compressed air that rank just behind military explosives as the loudest source of noise in the ocean, every 10-12 seconds, 24 hours a day, for months on end; and

WHEREAS, seismic airgun blasting to explore for oil and gas deposits has been proven to injure, disrupt, displace, and even kill marine life, such as whales which rely on their hearing to find food and mate, and can impair the health of many fish species, including those of commercial importance; and

WHEREAS, offshore hydraulic fracturing and other unconventional oil extraction techniques such as acid fracturing, matrix acidizing, gravel packing and cyclic steam injection collectively referred to here as "fracking and other

well stimulation,” provide another means to expand offshore oil and gas extraction; and,

WHEREAS, offshore fracking and other well stimulation release harmful toxic pollutants into the marine environment; and

WHEREAS, the 2019-2024 Draft Proposed Five-Year OCS Leasing Program is in violation of the Endangered Species Act, the Coastal Zone Management Act, the National Marine Sanctuaries Act, and the jurisdiction of the Marine Mammal Protection Act over oil and gas exploration using seismic airguns; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Fairfax recognizes that our communities, businesses, and industries depend on a healthy coastal environment for the benefit of current and future residents, property owners, and visitors;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the Town Council of the Town of Fairfax opposes offshore oil and gas drilling, seismic oil and gas exploration, and offshore fracking and other well stimulation which unnecessarily risk our economic and ecological health, individually and cumulatively;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Council of the Town of Fairfax opposes any plan or legislation which encourages any oil and gas development, exploration, or fracking and other well stimulation offshore, that would impact the citizens of California;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Town Council of the Town of Fairfax that this resolution be submitted to the US Department of the Interior Secretary David L. Bernhardt, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management Acting Director Walter Cruickshank, California Governor Gavin Newsom.

The foregoing Resolution was duly passed and adopted at a regular meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Fairfax, held in said Town on the 4th day of November 2020, by the following vote, to wit:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

RENEE GODDARD, Mayor

Attest: _____
Michele Gardner, Town Clerk