

SODA

STOP OFFSHORE DRILLING IN THE ATLANTIC
PO BOX 1743, PAWLEYS ISLAND, SC 29585

Date: April 29, 2019

To: **Members of the South Carolina House Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee**

From: SODA – Stop Offshore Drilling in the Atlantic

RE: Your April 30, 2019 meeting – Important information re: **H. 3471 and H. 3087**

In case you think the threat of offshore drilling and seismic surveys is only a coastal issue, please read...

It is well known that every coastal municipality has passed a resolution opposing offshore drilling and seismic airgun surveys. What may be less well known is the concern for our coast across our state. To see what people in the Upstate had to say about this issue, SODA spent this past weekend in Spartanburg hosting a table at the annual Spring Fling Festival.



We spoke with several hundred people from across the upstate about the threat of offshore drilling and seismic airgun surveys and to our surprise, most of the people we spoke with were very well informed about this issue – far more than the folks we met at the same event just one year ago. And they want you to protect our coast!

In total, **we collected 559 signatures from adults and another 194 from children** in just 10 hours across the two days we were there (signatures are attached). These are YOUR CONSTITUENTS. They are watching how you will vote on these infrastructure bills.

This gentleman, Capt. Mark Queenan, told us about his experience as a diver and commercial spear fisherman in the Gulf of Mexico and how the amount of fish significantly decreased after the Deepwater Horizon catastrophe. He pointed to the image of a hog snapper on his shirt and described how “the oil spill wiped them out really badly” because they eat shrimp and the shrimp were all killed by oil and dispersant. As his shirt said, Capt. Mark is a “Reel Legend!”

We also met Marshall Franklin, a former rig diver in the Gulf of Mexico. He shared harrowing tales of positioning explosives underwater to remove old oilfield structures. These two men have seen the damage wreaked by the oil and gas industry in the Gulf and vehemently agreed, “No drilling in the Atlantic!”



Two years ago, SODA met Gerd Faulstich, owner of The Deli Korner in Spartanburg, at a South Carolina Restaurant and Lodging Association (SCRLA) conference in Myrtle Beach. Because he is concerned about our state's economy and the beauty of our coast, Gerd has made it possible for SODA to participate in Spring Fling these past two years.



The SCRLA passed a resolution opposing offshore drilling and seismic surveys. Business people care about this issue.



This amazing 10-year-old, Rumeur Stephens, is passionately opposed to offshore drilling. We learned that she was born in Georgetown when her parents lived on the coast. They now live in Spartanburg. She had learned about the threat of drilling and seismic some time ago, and has been very concerned about harm to marine animals and “her beach.” She brought her parents back to our table and they took petition forms so they can collect signatures and educate folks in their neighborhood about the harm to our coast. Rumeur is fully aware that these decisions are impacting her future. She says, “No drilling off our coast!”



Your constituents are deeply concerned about the coast, especially about the places where they own property and they like to visit every summer. Several were even wearing t-shirts from Myrtle Beach, Folly Beach and Beaufort! Kids, teenagers, parents and grandparents all wanted to tell us which coastal town was their favorite, and shared memories of their vacations.

The people of the Upstate ask you to represent their interests and protect our coast.

VOTE “NO” on H. 3471. VOTE “YES” on H. 3087.