



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 726

Resolution calling on the State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign A.10608, also known as the ‘Save Our Waters’ Act, which would prohibit offshore oil and gas drilling and exploration activities.

By Council Members Ulrich, Rosenthal, Kallos and Van Bramer

Whereas, Many New York City communities, businesses, and industries depend on a healthy coastal environment for the benefit of current and future residents, property owners, and visitors; and

Whereas, In New York, hundreds of thousands of jobs and billions of dollars of the state’s gross domestic product depend on clean, oil-free water and beaches and on abundant fish and wildlife; and

Whereas, The vast majority of New York’s ocean wealth stems from its 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, thus threatening the livelihoods of commercial and recreational fisherfolk, and small businesses that rely on a clean and healthy ocean and beaches; and

Whereas, New York City has become more vulnerable to severe weather events, which can cause or exacerbate leaks from offshore oil infrastructure; and

Whereas, Offshore drilling may require significant onshore infrastructure, such as pipelines or refineries, which would harm the character of New York’s coastline and could exacerbate wetlands loss and storm surge, as well as have impacts on sea level rise; and

Whereas, The harmful impacts from offshore oil and gas drilling and exploration anywhere along the Atlantic coastline could extend far beyond immediately surrounding areas and severely impact communities

that rely on the robust economy of the marine industry; and

Whereas, Offshore drilling and exploration continues our society's reliance on fossil fuels, perpetuates dirty carbon pollution, and contributes to climate change and the resulting sea level rise and extreme weather; and

Whereas, On January 5, 2018, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior under the Trump Administration unveiled the national Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Program, which proposes to make more than 90% of the total offshore acreage in the United States available to oil and gas drilling; and

Whereas, The program could affect all coastal states, with the exception of Florida, which U.S. Secretary of the Interior under the Trump Administration announced would be exempt from the policy; and

Whereas, The federal government estimates there is as much as 1.8 billion barrels of oil and 11 trillion cubic feet of natural gas off the 1,700 miles of coast of New York, 520 miles of which includes New York City alone, which makes New York a significant target for offshore oil and gas exploration and drilling; and

Whereas, Before drilling can begin, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) allows initial survey work to be conducted with airguns to take place, which would be devastating for New York's ocean environment; and

Whereas, Airguns produce sound waves that send destructive shock waves into sediments and are strong enough to penetrate six miles into the ocean floor; and

Whereas, Noise and vibration caused by airguns can be louder than a jet engine on an airplane, and continuous noise from a seismic survey can effect an area of thousands of square miles for weeks or months at a time; and

Whereas, Seismic airgun blasting to explore for oil and gas deposits has been proven to disrupt and displace marine life, such as whales, which rely on sound to find food and mate, and can impair the health of many fish and shellfish species, including those of commercial importance like squid, lobster and scallops; and

Whereas, In addition to exploration and drilling, there is the risk of a catastrophic spill, which has the

potential to devastate our coastal economies and cause irreparable harm to the environment; and

Whereas, Offshore rigs used for oil and gas drilling and exploration can dump contaminants, including lead, chromium, mercury and benzene into our waters; and

Whereas, On May 4, 2018, New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo announced the 'Save Our Waters' bill, which aims to prohibit offshore drilling infrastructure in New York waters; and

Whereas, On June 18, 2018, the New York State Assembly passed A.10608, also known as the 'Save Our Waters' Act, which prohibits the use of condemnation of lands for the use of corporations to install infrastructure associated with the production of oil and natural gas in the North Atlantic Planning Area, and prohibits vessels from using New York waters if associated with the production of oil and natural gas in the North Atlantic Planning Area; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign A.10608, also known as the 'Save Our Waters' Act, which would prohibit offshore oil and gas drilling and exploration activities.

NPJ
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