



The Defense Support Initiative
of Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton Counties

July 19, 2010

Mr. Chris Hart, Interim Director
Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development
Executive Office of the Governor
The Capitol
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Re: Oil Drilling Ban Special Session

Dear Mr. Hart:

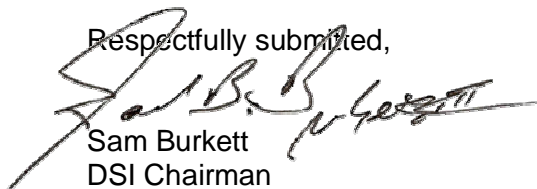
The tri-county Defense Support Initiative has long opposed oil drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. Enclosed for your review please find our November 13, 2009 and April 26, 2010 resolutions. The DSI supports Governor Crist's proposed ban for "exploration for, drilling for, extraction of and production of oil in Florida territorial seas" but not as a substitute for economic recovery or necessary clean-up strategies.

The DSI strongly recommends that the State Legislature maintain the established oil and gas drilling exclusion zone in strategically located state waters to ensure the protection of Florida and Federal recognized military ranges as well as access to those ranges; to continue the protection of the Joint Gulf Range Complex by prohibiting oil drilling operations in state waters east of the Military Mission Line (MML) (86°41'); establish a no drill zone in state waters east of MML (86°41') to longitude 84°22' as far south as necessary; and further, preserve the utility of the military ranges as the highest priority when the state or federal government considers lease rights to explore for and/or develop oil and gas beneath sovereign submerged lands, even to the point of giving the military veto power when the exploration and development activities pose a risk to the military mission.

The Deepwater Horizon explosion on April 20th has and will continue to create immeasurable economic impacts for Northwest Florida. It is clear that the economic impacts will be broad and that the time for implementing a strategic action plan is upon us. It is for this reason that the Okaloosa EDC along with Florida's Great Northwest and the coastal communities of Northwest Florida has requested economic impact relief funding that will ensure the region's ability to aggressively address the impacts caused from the oil spill disaster.

The DSI supports Governor Crist's proposed ban for "exploration for, drilling for, extraction of and production of oil in Florida territorial seas." However, the ban on drilling is but one piece of the puzzle that needs to be built.

Respectfully submitted,



Sam Burkett
DSI Chairman

enclosure