

RESOLUTION NO. 26-05

A RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE INCLUSION OF NEW OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS LEASING OFF THE COAST OF FLORIDA IN THE FIVE-YEAR NATIONAL OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF OIL AND GAS LEASING PROGRAM.

WHEREAS, the economy of Clearwater depends heavily on a healthy coastal and marine environment, supporting industries such as tourism, recreation, commercial and recreational fishing, and related small businesses; and

WHEREAS, clean water, thriving ecosystems, and an attractive coastal environment are vital to maintaining property values, sustaining local businesses, and ensuring the quality of life for residents and visitors alike; and

WHEREAS, offshore oil and gas exploration, development, and drilling carry inherent risks, including oil spills, leaks, habitat destruction, and pollution, which could cause significant, long-term harm to our coastal economy, natural resources, and way of life; and

WHEREAS, seismic airgun blasting used in offshore oil and gas exploration poses a significant threat to marine life, including whales, dolphins, sea turtles, and fish stocks, by producing loud, repetitive underwater noise that can disrupt communication, navigation, reproduction, and foraging behavior; and

WHEREAS, the ecological damage caused by seismic testing undermines the health of marine ecosystems and directly threatens industries such as commercial and recreational fishing that depend on robust marine populations; and

WHEREAS, even the perception of environmental risk associated with offshore drilling can negatively impact tourism, investment, and business development in coastal areas; and

WHEREAS, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management is developing the 11th National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program and has requested public input on whether to include new offshore leasing areas; and

WHEREAS, the protection of our coastal environment and economy is a priority for Clearwater, and the long-term well-being of our community outweighs the short-term benefits that expanded offshore drilling might offer to the oil and gas industry.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CLEARWATER, FLORIDA;

Section 1. The City of Clearwater formally opposes the inclusion of any new offshore oil and gas leasing off the coast of Florida in the 11th National Outer Continental

Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program.

Section 2. The City of Clearwater urges the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to prioritize the protection of coastal economies, communities, and ecosystems by excluding new offshore oil and gas leases from the final leasing program

Section 3. The City of Clearwater requests our federal representatives in Congress to oppose efforts to expand offshore drilling and to support policies that protect our oceans, coasts, and the industries and communities that depend on them.

Section 4. A copy of this resolution shall be sent to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Senator Ashley Moody, Senator Rick Scott, Representative Anna Paulina Luna and any other relevant officials.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Council of Clearwater, Florida, on February 19, 2026.

Bruce Rector
Mayor

Approved as to form:

Attest:

Owen Kohler
Interim City Attorney

Rosemarie Call
City Clerk