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Politics

API's 'Explore Offshore' Campaign Heads to Capitol Hill

By KEVIN DERBY (SOURCE/KEVIN-DERBY)
December 3, 2018 - 6:00am

The American Petroleum Institute's (API) “Explore Offshore” campaign, which includes expanding energy exploration efforts including in the eastern part of the Gulf of Mexico and in the Atlantic, came to Capitol Hill last week.

The national “Explore Offshore” campaign is led by former U.S. Veterans Affairs Sec. Jim Nicholson, who led the Republican National Committee (RNC), and former U.S. Sen. Jim Webb, D-Va., who ran for the Democratic presidential nomination in the 2016 election cycle. Those national chairs were part of a briefing on Capitol Hill and were joined by state chairs, including former Florida Lt. Gov. Jeff Kottkamp.

API released reports on drilling in the Atlantic and the Eastern Gulf which “estimate that offshore-related activities could generate additional non-bonus and royalty revenue such as personal and corporate income tax, property tax and sales taxes” including $2.5 billion in tax revenues for the Sunshine State.

“I am a strong believer that our national security and economic health depends on a vibrant, all of the above energy policy,” Webb, who briefly ran for the Democratic presidential nomination in the 2016 election cycle, said. “When I was in the Senate I offered legislation which received bipartisan support, to open up oil exploration along the Atlantic seaboard, using our advanced modern technology and improved safety techniques. We now are the world’s leading producer and refiner of natural gas and oil. This economic boost also allows us to advance our national security priorities throughout the world, and to stand firmly against potential adversaries whose economies are based disproportionately on energy wealth.

“Energy independence requires long-term planning, and taking advantage of the resources at hand,” Webb added. “It's basic common sense for us to be able to use American technology and know-how in order to explore the areas along America’s Outer Continental Shelf to see what’s out there and to have a discussion about where some of these areas might be opened up for oil production.”

“Energy abundance is critical to our ongoing energy revolution, which supports the U.S. economy and jobs and puts
API brings its "Explore Offshore" campaign to Capitol Hill, pushing for ... http://sunshinestatenews.com/story/apis-explore-offshore-campaign-head... downward pressure on prices at the pump. Current policy keeps 94 percent of our federal offshore areas closed to natural gas and oil exploration. To me, that's the same as operating with one hand tied behind our back, and it's time to change that. We know we'll need more oil and natural gas for decades to come. This simply means that if we don't produce natural gas and oil here in America, it will be produced by other nations - ones that don't have the same advanced technologies, environmental standards or best practices. Producing here at home is better for America, our environment, and the economy," Nicholson said.

"Every barrel we produce here in the United States is one less barrel coming from unstable, unpredictable foreign sources," he added. "That not only creates a lot of jobs here in America, it also strengthens our national security. I'm proud to be a part of the Explore Offshore coalition. I'm proud to support new jobs. And I'm proud to continue supporting the best military in the world by advancing U.S. energy security."

Kottkamp, Dr. Miriam Ramirez, who served in the Senate of Puerto Rico, and former Okaloosa County Commissioner Wayne Harris lead “Explore Offshore’s” Florida efforts. Kottkamp served under then Gov. Charlie Crist who has opposed drilling in the Gulf, even calling for a special legislative session on the issue. Crist held that special session after the massive oil spill in the Gulf in 2010. However, while Crist started drifting to the left and that and other issues to run for the U.S. Senate in 2010 with no party affiliation and eventually join the Democrats, Kottkamp has remained a conservative Republican.

Back in June, when they launched their efforts, the Florida leaders of “Explore Offshore” weighed in on why they were backing the campaign.

"As a native Puerto Rican and a volunteer to rebuild Puerto Rico from the devastation of Hurricane Maria, I know firsthand that we should not take for granted access to reliable energy," Ramirez. “The Department of the Interior took a step in the right direction by proposing to open up additional areas of the Eastern Gulf of Mexico to new exploration for oil and natural gas. Our neighbors in the Gulf of Mexico support thriving tourism industries all while developing offshore energy resources that create high-paying jobs to those states, provide much needed state revenue and economic investment, and deliver greater energy security to America."

"With over 20 million residents and 110 million annual visitors---the availability of affordable energy is critical to our quality of life in Florida," Kottkamp said. “Access to new sources of domestic oil and natural gas is important to maintain or quality of life in the Sunshine State. As we consider exploration for new energy sources we must also be mindful Florida's environment. We look forward to working with our local leaders to discuss ways to maintain our state's natural beauty while at the same time expanding opportunities to keep our nation energy independent."

"I've had the great honor of serving our country in the military for 27 years, and serving my county as a commissioner," Harris said. "My focus is on ensuring that future generations get to enjoy the same opportunities that I have, in a nation that is safe and secure. A key to making that possible is putting in place energy policies that support the constant, reliable and affordable supply of energy our families and businesses will always need to grow and thrive. The more of that energy that comes from our own borders the better. It's time we used recent advances in technology and science to find out exactly what energy resources lay in our waters, and how we can produce that energy in a responsible manner in the years ahead. That's how we will make Florida and America more energy secure."

Noting that oil and natural gas make up most electricity use at the state and national levels, Explore Offshore insisted that energy exploration in the Gulf and off the coast of Florida could lead to more than 56,000 new jobs by 2035 and added $1 billion annually to the state revenue and $2.6 billion in private development.
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Comments

Submitted by Nick M on December 6, 2018 - 2:03pm

Military training is not a road-block for offshore exploration. Significant operations in the Gulf operate side by side with military training and operations. Anything off the coast of Florida would operate the same way and not negatively impact military preparedness.

reply (/comment/reply/7170447/81966)

Submitted by Jim Heald on December 7, 2018 - 3:49pm

Those who understand military operations in the eastern Gulf of Mexico are concerned that TESTING of new and legacy live weapons, munitions, and other armaments are not compatible with above surface platforms. This is a national security issue as articulated by DoD and USAF reports to Congress. Loss of test areas will undermine our military capability of fielding new weapons to keep our ability to fight wars and defend the US. Even training with live weapons will be impacted. Don't believe the uninformed who point to training done with simulated weapons to claim that there will be no negative impact. Our military needs to have practiced with live weapons BEFORE they go into harms way.

reply (/comment/reply/7170447/82065)

Submitted by Yesenia on December 6, 2018 - 1:17pm

Disappointed at the shallow attacks on this effort. Offshore energy already exists in other parts of the Gulf, and is a benefit for states that cultivate natural gas and oil production. Florida would be lucky to have access to those benefits as well.

reply (/comment/reply/7170447/81963)

Submitted by Jim Heald on December 7, 2018 - 3:54pm

Agree that offshore energy exploration and production exists in other parts of the Gulf. That is exactly why the military cannot test live weapons or train with live weapons in the Central and Western Planning areas of the Gulf. The only place left that has large enough clear areas to protect the public safety during live weapons operations is in the Eastern Gulf. I'm disappointed that the proponents appear to not read the DoD and USAF reports to Congress that articulate the current and future needs and clearly state the incompatibility of above surface platforms...
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with the use of live weapons.
_reply (/comment/reply/7170447/82066)

Submitted by Jim Kallinger on December 6, 2018 - 1:15pm

American energy is better than reliance on foreign energy. If this can shrink our foreign
dependence, even just a little, I'm 100% for it.
_reply (/comment/reply/7170447/81962)

Submitted by Voted Blue on December 3, 2018 - 11:24am

NO more oceanic oil exploration, NO more oceanic oil drilling. How much stupider can we all get???
_reply (/comment/reply/7170447/81652)

Submitted by Jbreit on December 3, 2018 - 10:51am

What a shame to see the former Okaloosa County Commissioner Wayne Harris sniffing at the
pockets of folks who would ignore the military importance of the Gulf of Mexico Test and Training
Range and then spouting that is was an honor to serve his county and county. C'mon man!!!!!!!
_reply (/comment/reply/7170447/81645)

Submitted by Robert Warner on December 3, 2018 - 8:19am

Sad damned day when the API raises it's Koch Energy empire head - and we mindlessly throw away
decades of clean energy progress so that they can loot, pollute, and monopolise. "Affordable
energy". Another ruse, pretext, and lie. We never learn.
_reply (/comment/reply/7170447/81628)

Submitted by C Breeze on December 3, 2018 - 7:03am

"DON'T BUY" this nonsense from these "former" political panderers (read: "prostitutes") now
collecting money from "special interest" Lobbys to "pull the wool over your eyes" for THEIR OWN
SELF-INTERESTS ! ! !
_reply (/comment/reply/7170447/81618)
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