

Title: **Coastal cities rising up against Atlantic drilling**
 Author: BY SEAN COCKERHAM scockerham@mcclatchydc.com
 Size: 69.59 square inch
 Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564



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BY SEAN COCKERHAM

scockerham@mcclatchydc.com

WASHINGTON

As the Obama administration prepares to open the Atlantic Ocean to oil and gas drilling for the first time in decades, the coast is in rebellion.

More than 70 cities and counties in the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida have passed resolutions opposing oil exploration or drilling off

their coasts, pushing the president to reverse course and keep drilling rigs from the Eastern seaboard. In South Carolina at least 20 coastal city governments have voiced opposition.

The latest protest against Obama's plan came from the seaside town of Swansboro, N.C., which passed a resolu-

tion earlier this week against offshore drilling.

"The risks are very real,"

said Frank Tursi, newly elected to the town's board of commissioners.

Obama's January announcement that he is proposing a drilling lease sale in the Atlantic has ignited a furious debate over energy,

jobs and the environment, with governors of East Coast states eager for development but many coastal towns terrified of the potential impact on tourism and fishing.

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DRILL

sion last month to cancel drilling lease sales far to the north in the Arctic Ocean. They see a potential opening as the president becomes more assertive on environmental issues as he prepares to leave office after next year's elections.

"For the life of me I just can't understand why this is even an issue. Tourism generates so much money to the state, it's basically the lifeblood of eastern North Carolina," said Matt Price, a real estate developer in North Carolina's Outer Banks. "I doubt people want to come to a place where oil washed up on the beaches or there's dead sea life from seismic testing."

Coastal drilling opponents are fighting an uphill battle, though – against their own governors and senators who enthusiastically support offshore drilling and would object if Obama

abandoned the plan.

Obama has opened a huge swath of the Atlantic, from Delaware to central Florida, for seismic exploration for oil and natural gas. Those tests, in which seismic cannons repeatedly blast as loud as a howitzer under the sea, could get started as soon as the spring once federal permits are issued.

It's not clear how much oil and gas exists off the Eastern seaboard and the tests are meant to change that. The seismic cannons will blast compressed air underwater, sending

sound waves to the bottom of the ocean that produce echoes to be used by industry to map oil and gas deposits.

Oil companies will use the data to decide whether to bid on Atlantic drilling leases. The president proposes a 2021 drilling lease sale off the coasts of North Carolina, South

Carolina, Virginia and Georgia, areas long closed to fossil fuel development. Governors of all those states support the drilling.

All major coastal cities in North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia are against the drilling plan, though – with resolutions of opposition from Myrtle Beach, Charleston and Hilton Head Island, Wilmington, N.C., and Savannah, Ga., along with dozens of smaller towns. Similar resolutions have been passed by cities in Florida, Virginia, New Jersey, Maryland and Delaware.

"Every coastal municipality in South Carolina is now on board (with the opposition)," Beaufort Mayor Billy Keyserling said at a recent roundtable in Washington put on by the environmental group Oceana.

Keyserling said the United States already has a glut of cheap oil from

the fracking boom and "we don't need to take these kinds of risks."

Republican U.S. Reps. Mark Sanford and Tom Rice of South Carolina also are opposing Atlantic offshore drilling, as is Rep. James Clyburn, D-S.C.

All four U.S. senators from North Carolina and South Carolina support drilling, though, as does South Carolina Republican Gov. Nikki Haley.

"Governor Haley believes offshore exploration should be done in a way that protects, and never compromises, our environment, our ports and tourism industry," said Haley spokeswoman Chaney Adams. "But as she has worked with members of the congressional delegation and the General Assembly on this critical economic development issue, she's also been clear: Exploring offshore for energy is

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Not everyone along the Carolina coast is opposed to drilling. Carteret County, N.C., which lies between Wilmington and the Outer Banks, bucked the anti-drilling tide this month with a resolution in

support of N.C. Gov. Pat McCrory’s push for oil and gas exploration off the state’s coast.

Swansboro, N.C., commissioner Jim Allen also supports offshore drilling, although his fellow town commissioners outvoted him 3 to 1 on the issue.

“I think if we’ve got gas or oil out there then I don’t see anything wrong

with us drilling for it,” Allen said. “I am all for doing anything to create jobs.”

Allen lost his re-election race this month. So did Dean Lambeth, mayor of Kure Beach, N.C., who drew hundreds of protestors when he supported oil and gas exploration last year.

Swearingen said the

anti-drilling resolutions prove that coastal opposition is strong and now it is a matter of convincing others. the rest of North Carolina.

“We need to get the word out to the Piedmont and the mountains,” she said.

Staff writer Sammy Fretwell contributed.



Title: **SC Amazon shoppers will soon pay sales tax**
 Author: By SEANNA ADCOX The Associated Press
 Size: 53.63 square inch
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SC Amazon shoppers will soon pay sales tax

By SEANNA ADCOX

The Associated Press

COLUMBIA — A sales-tax break the Legislature gave Amazon in 2011 expires Jan. 1, making South Carolina the last state to collect among those where officials cut similar deals with the online retail giant.

Taxing Amazon's in-state sales could add tens of millions of dollars to South Carolina's coffers in 2016, said Max Behlke, the National Conference of State Legislatures' manager of state and federal relations.

State Revenue Director Rick Reames declined to give estimates beyond saying, "We expect a significant increase in sales tax revenues."

For years, the Seattle-based company fought collecting sales taxes from its customers. The U.S. Supreme Court has twice ruled — in 1967 and 1992 — that a state can't require a company to collect and remit the tax unless it

has a "physical presence" in the state.

As Amazon expanded, rather than collect taxes in states that tried to force it, the company severed ties with affiliates and scrapped plans for distribution centers. South Carolina was among

10 states that gave Amazon a temporary tax reprieve in exchange for jobs and investment, Behlke said.

In all, South Carolina loses out on an estimated \$254 million in taxes from out-of-state sales — mostly online but also through catalogues and phone purchases, according to a 2014 report by the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Behlke cautioned the number's not precise.

"No one knows the full amount states are losing," he said.

But on New Year's Day, South Carolina joins 26 states where Amazon, the heavy-

weight of online retailing, collects the tax, according to the company's website. Five states don't have sales taxes.

Spokespeople for Amazon did not return multiple phone and email messages.

South Carolina gave Amazon a 4 1/2-year exemption from collecting sales taxes from its residents in exchange for creating at least 2,000 full-time jobs with health benefits and investing \$125 million by Dec. 31, 2013. But the deal that brought a distribution center to Lexington County — and later, a second center in Spartanburg — almost didn't happen.

The law passed in June 2011 without the signature of Gov. Nikki Haley, whose vocal opposition nearly sank one of her predecessor's last big economic deals. Gov. Mark Sanford's administration advocated extending to Amazon the five-year sales tax collection exemption

that QVC received in 2006 to come to Florence.

But as details on the exemption emerged, opposition mounted. Haley left the decision to legislators while opposing it at meetings across the state, calling it bad policy that gives Amazon an unfair price advantage over retailers that must collect the tax.

Opponents included tea party activists, the state's small business chamber, and national retail chains that backed an anti-Amazon advertising campaign.

Amid the opposition, the House rejected the initial deal — which promised 1,249 jobs and a \$90 million investment. Amazon then announced it was abandoning its plans. Local legislators and elected officials launched their own public-relations campaign and Amazon upped its offer, leading to approval of the enhanced package.

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File • The Associated Press

A forklift operator moves a pallet of goods Feb. 13 at an Amazon.com fulfillment center in DuPont, Wash.

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Rising up against offshore drilling

70 cities and counties pass resolutions opposing oil exploration off the Atlantic coast.

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The latest protest against Obama's plan came from the seaside town of Swansboro, N.C., which passed a resolution Tuesday

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"The risks are very real," said Frank Tursi, newly elected to the town's board of commissioners.

Obama's January announcement that he is proposing a drilling lease sale in the Atlantic has ignited a furious debate over energy, jobs and the environment, with governors of East Coast states eager for development but many coastal towns terrified of the potential impact on tourism and fishing.

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"Governor McCrory continues to support a multi-faceted energy strategy that will create jobs and help with our coun-

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Obama proposes to open the Atlantic Ocean to oil and gas drilling

Coastal towns and cities along the eastern seaboard are

fighting the plan

The governors of South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia and Virginia support drilling

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Not everyone along the Carolina coast is opposed to drilling. Carteret County, North Carolina, which lies between Wilmington and the Outer Banks, bucked the anti-drilling tide this month with a resolution in support of McCrory's push for oil and gas exploration off the state's coast.

Swansboro, N.C., commissioner Jim Allen also supports offshore drilling, although his fellow town commissioners outvoted him 3 to 1 on the issue.

"I think if we've got gas or oil out there then I don't see anything wrong with us drilling for it," Allen said in an interview. "I am all for doing anything to create jobs."

Allen lost his re-election race this month. So did Dean Lambeth, mayor of Kure Beach, N.C., who drew hundreds of protestors when he supported oil and gas exploration last year.

"A lot of my campaign was based on opposing seismic testing and offshore oil," said Emilie Swearingen, who defeated Lambeth in the mayor's race.

"We have dozens and dozens and dozens of 'do not

drill' signs all over our town."

Swearingen said the anti-drilling resolutions prove that coastal opposition is strong and now it is a matter of convincing the rest of North Carolina.

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Emilie Swearingen, incoming mayor of Kure Beach, N.C.



AP/Seattle Post-Intelligencer

An oil drilling rig arrives aboard a transport ship at sunrise.

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 Author: By COLIN RIDDLE criddle@indexjournal.com
 Size: 49.75 square inch
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■ REFUGEES

County unlikely to tackle Syrian issue

By COLIN RIDDLE
 criddle@indexjournal.com

As a growing number of state and local governments are voting to keep Syrian refugees from moving to their communities, Greenwood County seems unlikely to tackle the issue.

Greenwood County Councilman Robbie Templeton thinks a resolution, which is largely ceremonial and likely has no legal impact, is unnecessary.

"At this point, there is no reason for us to take any action," Templeton said. "It would be more of a way to let our legislators know, but I think they already know."

Templeton mentioned the issue to Council during its last meeting as something to keep an eye on. Other counties, including Greenville and Spartanburg, passed resolutions barring Syrian refugees.

"I had some folks in the community in my district share concerns," Templeton said. "At that time, I wanted to get it on Council's radar as a possible course of action since other county councils are doing it."

Templeton said the state legislature is likely to take up the issue for the whole state. Prefiled legislation for the legislative session, beginning in January, is due Wednesday and Dec. 9 for the state Senate and Thursday and Dec. 10 for the state House of Representatives.

Templeton said while he appreciates the nation's diversity, he thinks the

country needs to be cautious.

"Our country has always been a melting pot for all who are welcome. We have always opened up our country to people to improve their quality of life and safety," Templeton said. "However, I do think things have changed over history, and we now have some very real threats as it relates to certain groups."

He said the government needs to focus on properly vetting refugees to eliminate any risk.

"We still need to be a safe haven for people, but the time we find ourselves in, we need to be cautious," Templeton said.

South Carolina currently has two organizations — World Relief and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee

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REFUGEES

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Services — approved to resettle refugees from the federal government, which have not placed any refugees from the war-stricken Syria, according to reports.

The issue of whether the United States should take in Syrian refugees was raised after the Paris attacks earlier this month as the Islamic State was implicated in the attacks and the terror group has a significant presence in the Middle Eastern country, which borders Israel, Iraq, Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and the Mediterranean.

Republicans in Congress have since been vocal of their opposition and recently passed a bill toughening vetting procedures and pausing the resettlement of Syrian and Iraqi refugees until better vetting policies and procedures can be implemented. The Islamic State also has a significant presence in Iraq.

Barack Obama vowed to veto the bill, which was co-sponsored by Rep. Jeff Duncan, R-Ware Shoals, and con-

tinues to call for support in bringing 10,000 Syrian refugees to the U.S. in 2016.

Templeton said he has lost faith in the administration and is not sure changes can be made until a new president is in office.

“Until we can truly vet these individuals, it’s something we have to take seriously,” Templeton said. “Times have changed. We need to make sure we properly vet, and we need to be extremely careful about who we let into the country.”

Gov. Nikki Haley, along with more than two dozen other governors, sent Secretary of State John Kerry a letter requesting the denial of Syrian refugees.

While many legislators from the Lakelands voiced support for barring refugees from coming to South Carolina, the issue still might be up to the federal level.

A letter from Office of Refugee Resettlement Director Robert Carey to state resettlement

officials contends states have no authority to deny refugees based on race, religion, nationality or political opinion, citing the Refugee Act of 1980.

Carey also highlighted in the letter all refugees are subject to the highest level of security checks of any category of traveler to the U.S., calling the screening and vetting process multi-layered and intensive, involving multiple law enforcement, national security and intelligence agencies across the federal government.

Duncan previously said one of the biggest holes in the government’s vetting of Syrian refugees is the lack of documentation and information of refugees from their own country, which has been mired by civil war for four years.

The conflict has produced close to 4.3 million refugees as of Nov. 17, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Most have settled in countries bordering Syria, with Turkey taking in nearly half of the refugees.



**ROBBIE
TEMPLETON**



Title: **Flood update: Roads repaired, mosquitoes starting to die**
 Author: Associated Press
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Flood update: Roads repaired, mosquitoes starting to die

Associated Press

COLUMBIA — The Thanksgiving weekend marks eight weeks since historic rainfall flooded parts of South Carolina.

Many things are returning to normal after up to 2 feet of rain fell in areas from Columbia to the coast from Oct. 2 to 5. Nearly 90 percent of the roads closed at the height of the storm are back open. Debris cleanup is ending. Lawmakers have started hearings to figure out how to pay for repairs.

But many questions remain. An official damage estimate has not been released, and until that figure is known, Gov. Nikki Haley and many state lawmakers say it will be impossible to commit to an exact plan on how to pay for the flood. The deadline to apply for federal assistance is Dec. 4.

Here is a look at how things are progressing since the flood:

Mosquitoes

The swarms of mosquitoes pestering people in South Carolina have finally met their match — the cold weather.

The recent cold snap has killed off or forced into hibernation most of the mosquitoes who thrived in the pools of standing water, said Frank Carson,

son, mosquito control manager for Charleston County.

Carson warned that if the weather turns back warm for a stretch before the next hard freeze, some of the bloodsuckers could return. The cold weather also prevents spraying, which can only be done with the temperature is above 50 degrees.

"You need some consistently freezing temperatures over time. They can be in so many places. You could have them in the larval stage in standing water and they still could survive and hatch off if it gets warmer," Carson said.

The boom in mosquitoes because of the flooding was unprecedented. Charleston County typically gets 120 complaints about mosquitoes in October. This year, workers were called 840 times, Carson said.

Carson's crews in an average October spray about 2,000 acres for mosquito larvae. This October, workers sprayed 78,000 acres.

Roads

Repairs to South Carolina roads are ahead of schedule.

In mid-October, the state Department of Transportation

hoped to have just 86 highways and bridges still closed on Thanksgiving. Instead, there are just 69 closures — 44 roads and 25 bridges. The DOT said it can't do anything with 26 of those roads because they run over dams where the owners haven't decided what to do with the damaged structures.

DOT Secretary Christy Hall said she is proud of her crews, who have put in long hours over the past eight weeks.

"The SCDOT team has shown their dedication and commitment to the people of SC through their hard work and perseverance," Hall said in an email.

Hall said last month she hoped to have a final estimate for how much damage to roads will cost. But she said this week that figure still isn't finalized.

Agriculture

The weather was cruel in so many ways to South Carolina farmers this year.

A dry summer wiped out part of the corn crop. Then, just a few weeks before harvest, floods destroyed peanuts, cotton and other fall crops. The state Agriculture Department estimates direct

losses to farmers at more than \$375 million.

The governor asked the U.S. Department of Agriculture this week to get crop insurance payments to farmers faster.

The flooding may have long-term effects as well. The water could have shifted soil and made fields unstable for heavy equipment. Perennial tree crops like peaches could be struggling with weeks of fully saturated soils making it hard to get nutrients and breeding mold.

Rainfall records

The rains in the state didn't end with the floods. There have been several other heavy rain events this fall, although none has reached the magnitude of the massive floods.

This will be the wettest September through November in both Columbia and Charleston. Columbia has seen more than 26 inches of rain during meteorological fall, which is three times the normal amount. Charleston has had almost 30 inches of rain during the same period, which is more than 250 percent of normal rainfall, according to the Southeast Regional Climate Center.

Title: **49TH ANNUAL GOVERNOR'S CAROLIGHTING**

Author:

Size: 2.94 square inch

Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564

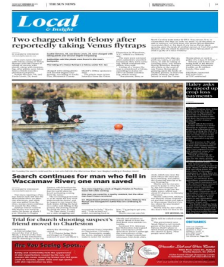


49TH ANNUAL GOVERNOR'S CAROLIGHTING

Gov. Nikki Haley and the first family kick off the holiday season with live performances and the lighting of the state Christmas tree. The event is open to the public.

**Festivities, 6 p.m. Monday, Nov. 30
on the north steps of the S.C. State
House. Program, 7 p.m.**

Title: **Haley asks to speed up crop loss payments**
 Author: The Associated Press
 Size: 16.27 square inch
 Myrtle Beach, SC Circulation: 61238



Haley asks to speed up crop loss payments

The Associated Press
 COLUMBIA

South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley wants the U.S. Department of Agriculture to speed up crop insurance payments to farmers who lost their harvests because of last month's historic flooding.

Haley asked Secretary Thomas Vilsack in a letter Monday to activate emergency loss adjustment procedures, noting the Oct. 2-5 storm that dumped 2 feet of rain on some areas of the state mere days or weeks before expected crop harvests.

"The process to file and receive payment for claims is slow and cumbersome," Haley wrote. Many farmers "are even required to harvest valueless crops at a significant expense."

Vilsack previously approved a disaster declaration for the state, giving farmers access to emergen-

cy, low-interest loans.

But farmers aren't interested in getting deeper in debt. Many of them already had operating loans and now must fix damaged equipment, so they have no cash flow for additional loan payments, said Aaron Wood, an assistant state agriculture commissioner.

How much insurance will help offset farmers' losses is not yet known, but payments aren't expected to even cover their costs.

The state Department of Agriculture estimates direct losses to farmers at more than \$375 million. Total losses to the agriculture industry will likely top \$587 million, Wood said.

"No South Carolina farmer that entered this fall with proper crop insurance and a viable business should lose that business solely because of this flood," Haley wrote.

Title: **Immigration policies put us at risk**

Author:

Size: 12.86 square inch

Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564



Immigration policies put us at risk

The terrible Paris terror attacks seem to indicate the United States is next unless we reverse our immigration policies. A good start would be not taking any Syrian immigrants.

The pro-immigration outfits are lobbying public opinion to bring in more immigrants. They say that America was built on immigrants. This includes the Chamber of Commerce; some Republican elected officials are leaning toward amnesty, along with church groups like the Evangelical Immigration Table. Our own Sen. Lindsay Graham and Gov. Nikki Haley were advocates for bringing more Syrian immigrants to South Carolina.

National security and local crime need to be considered. The Sept. 11 killers who crashed the aircraft into the twin towers were part of the undocumented alien community. During my term on the state Parole Board, I discovered that drug crimes among immigrants is widespread.

Then there is the cost to the taxpayers. Our hospitals, welfare agencies, law enforcement and public schools are being overwhelmed by undocumented immigrants. The Heritage Foundation estimates the long-term cost of amnesty for illegal immigrants is \$6.3 trillion.

We need to elect a president who will reverse the disastrous American immigration policies.

*- Jim Gordon
Chapin*