



## Fast Facts

DOE estimates that, if the process starts now, leasing for new offshore leases will not begin until 2012 and production is not likely before 2017. Total domestic production of crude oil with access to the outer continental shelf (OCS) is projected to be only 1.6 percent higher from 2012 to 2030 than with no access.

Total domestic production of crude oil with OCS access is projected to be only 5.6 million barrels per day in 2030 and an average wellhead price decrease of \$0.13 than if no access was granted, according to the DOE.

Lower 48 natural gas production with OCS access is projected to be only 590 billion cubic feet higher in 2030 than if no access was granted, according to the DOE.

While technology for preventing oil spills has improved, there were still 187 large offshore oil spills recorded in the Gulf of Mexico between 1985 and 2005.

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# Offshore Drilling is not the Answer

## What's At Stake?

Record energy prices combined with national security concern about foreign oil supplies have renewed interest in offshore oil and gas leasing along the Atlantic coast. In 2008, both the Bush Administration and Congress essentially ended federal moratoria on oil and gas leasing that have existed since 1982. Georgia and its neighboring states now may authorize the federal government to lease tracts off their respective coasts.

Georgia's near-shore coastal waters contain some of the most economically valuable and ecologically diverse ecosystems on the planet. Tourism brings more than 45 million visitors to our state annually, generating more than \$25 billion dollars for our economy. Many of Georgia's attractions lie in its natural features including our barrier islands, our wetlands and our coastal waters. We should not risk our state's greatest assets for an activity that will do little to secure our energy independence.

## Challenges

In its 2007 Annual Energy Outlook, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) estimates about 18 billion barrels of oil are available in off-shore regions currently off-limits for oil exploration and development. That's less than what than the amount of oil the U.S. imports in two days. Further, if these regions were opened, they wouldn't begin producing oil for about a decade and would have no significant effect on the price of fuel until about 2030 – over 20 years from now.

While new oil platforms would likely be located far enough offshore to be undetectable to the human eye, environmental impact would still be substantial. First, underwater oil drilling operations inject pollutants directly into the marine environment. Second, offshore operations will depend upon land-side facilities for support, supplies, and storage, creating a new industrial use at the marsh edge and competing with state efforts to acquire the few remaining coastal sites for tourism and recreation. Third, oil spills – whether resulting from accidents, negligence or storms at the platform, at inland storage or elsewhere – cause serious environmental damage.

Estimated domestic offshore oil reserves are 3% of annual global sales, but the U.S. accounts for over 25% of annual global oil consumption. Enhanced energy conservation can do more, faster to affect the global oil market picture than production from the small amount of Atlantic coast offshore resources.

## Next Steps

We should not get distracted from our pursuit of alternative sources of energy and energy conservation. Georgia legislators should continue to resist approval of oil and gas leasing off its coast, given its likely disruption of other aspects of the state's economy, such as tourism and fishing.

Instead, we should move ahead with common sense policies to create a new energy economy, such as raising fuel efficiency standards, reducing speed limits, creating incentives for fuel-efficient cars, investing in research and development for plug-in hybrids, improving building efficiency and setting strong renewable energy goals.