

## **Students Hold Demonstration to Demand that BP's Next Drilling Disaster Be Stopped**

Wilmington, NC – UNCW student activists launched a week of action today to call on Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar, to stop BP's next drilling disaster. While the oil from the Deepwater Horizon drilling disaster in the Gulf continues to wreak untold havoc on the local economy and ecosystems in the Gulf of Mexico, BP is trying to move forward with their next dangerous drilling project off of Alaska's Arctic coast, the so-called "Liberty" project. To get at the oil, BP will drill two miles below the seabed and then six to eight miles sideways below federal waters, yet BP classifies Liberty as "onshore" because drilling will be initiated from a gravel island connected to shore by a causeway.

"The moratorium on offshore drilling was put in place because of BP's careless behavior in the Gulf, and now they've found a loophole to continue business as usual in Alaska." said Brady Bradshaw, an organizer of the week of action, "Secretary Salazar can stop BP's Liberty drilling project by denying its application for a permit to drill."

UNCW Students generated over 250 phone calls into Secretary Salazar's office this week, calling on him to stop the "Liberty" project and move towards banning all new offshore drilling off U.S. coasts. They also organized a peaceful demonstration at Wrightsville Beach with the same message for Secretary Salazar: "Ban offshore drilling off all US coasts. We need clean energy now." The students say we must switch, as quickly as possible, to clean renewable energy sources, such as solar or wind, as an alternative to dirty and dangerous fossil fuels.

Cristina Benavides, a UNCW student, says "Our government has allowed loose regulation of the oil industry for far too long. The way I see it, both the government and the oil industry have lost their privileges. The time for offshore drilling is over, and should have been over, before the largest environmental catastrophe in U.S. history happened in the Gulf. Our government has the responsibility to protect us and our ecosystems, instead of protecting the fossil fuel industry and its profits."

The week of action from the Students Against Disastrous Drilling group is part of Greenpeace's campaign to get a permanent ban on all new offshore drilling projects.

Brinkley Hutchings, one of the call-in week organizers says, "We need clean, renewable energy now. Our generation is standing up to ensure that we end our addiction to fossil fuels and make the transition to clean energy sources that protect our future."

More information about the “Liberty Project”:

Many distinctive Arctic species make their home near BP’s proposed Liberty project. This includes polar bears, which are listed under the Endangered Species Act because global warming is causing their sea ice habitat to melt out from underneath them. A large oil spill in the Arctic – a place where an oil spill will be impossible to control - could spell disaster for this species that is already on the edge, as well as other ice-dependent species such as whales, seals and walrus.

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