

[Home](#) [Opinion](#)

## Slow down the stampede to OK offshore drilling

BY [RON LITTLEPAGE](#) | STORY UPDATED AT 12:38 AM ON SUNDAY, OCT. 25, 2009



[Subscribe to Ron's RSS feed](#)  
[See all of our feeds, and learn how to use RSS](#)  
[Ron's archive](#) | [See Ron's profile](#)

The charade in Tallahassee has begun.

A House committee held a five-hour workshop last week on the proposal to allow offshore drilling for oil and gas as close as three miles to Florida's Gulf Coast beaches.

As if the dye hasn't already been cast on that.

Dean Cannon, who takes over as House speaker in 2011, told folks at the workshop that he really, really, really wants to hear from all sides in the debate.

That's like the parent saying to the kid, OK, give me your best shot but then I'm going to lay down the law.

Cannon is already firmly in the "drill, baby, drill" camp, as are other legislative leaders such as Mike Haridopolos, who is slated to be the next Senate president.

A done deal? You bet.

A group of oil and gas producers with deep pockets is pushing hard for offshore drilling.

Big-time lobbyists have been hired. So have big-time public relations people. Campaign contributions have been made.

Who wins in Tallahassee? See above.

Why put Florida's Gulf Coast beaches and the state's tourism industry in harm's way? Finding more oil will bring down the price of gas. Nope. The world market sets the price.

It will reduce the country's dependence on foreign oil. Maybe, but not by much.

It will bring billions of dollars of new revenue into the state's depleted coffers. Remember the Lottery?

OK. The current line for drilling proponents is that it will create thousands of needed jobs. So would investing in renewable energy technology, which wouldn't endanger the state's beaches but would make for a better future.

Then there's this:

Technological advances have made oil and gas drilling environmentally safe. The danger of an oil spill sliming our beaches is almost nil.

On Aug. 21, a rig off the northwest Australian coast had a blowout and began spewing 400 gallons of crude oil a day into the Timor Sea.

The spill has harmed wildlife and killed thousands of fish. Villagers on Indonesian islands have been sickened by eating the tainted fish.

As of last week - two months later - the leak still had not been plugged.

It's being called "the worst since offshore drilling began more than 40 years ago" off Australia's coast.

Imagine that rig being just three miles from the white, sandy beaches of Florida's Gulf Coast.

Offshore drilling has been banned in Florida's coastal waters since 1990.

"Today's focus was on the threshold question of whether it makes sense to consider lifting the ban," Cannon told reporters after Wednesday's workshop.

"I happen to think the answer is yes, but there are those with other viewpoints, and I wanted to make sure that I had the opportunity to hear from them."

Hearing without listening is nothing but a charade.

[ron.littlepage@jacksonville.com](mailto:ron.littlepage@jacksonville.com),

(904) 359-4284

### User Comments



**Drill for some Oil!**

Submitted by [nffc](#) on Mon. 10/26/2009 at 11:27 pm Normal 0 false false false MicrosoftInternetExplorer4

Mr. Littlepage makes a very plaintive case that does not stand up to the facts.

1. The world runs on oil and its byproducts. The state of Alaska has a Permanent Fund for oil. Each and every resident was paid \$1,305.00 in 2009 from the fund. Florida could have the same if it weren't so stupid. The economy of every country would cease to exist without the benefits of oil. It is a rich natural resource except to the ninny crowd.
2. Who wins in Tallahassee? WE ALL DO, if the stupid people get out of the way and allow for some economic activity to take place! Mr. Littlepage, it takes oil companies to drill for oil and it is very expensive. What part of economic activity do you not understand? Of course they hire PR people and lobbyists. They have to make a living too! What is your solution - invent a government program?
3. If oil and gas drilling had started 10yrs ago, the US would be a lot closer to being energy self sufficient than it is today.
4. Very few renewable energy jobs have materialized out of the environmentalist wackos dreams yet. Renewable energy technology brings its own set of environmental concerns with it. What about the hazard of the mercury in all those stupid compact fluorescent bulbs? Electric cars have to be charged with energy produced by oil that would be more efficient burn

in an internal combustion engine. Millions of miles of roads are paved with the residual tar of oil refining.

5. A 400 gallon a day oil leak from a rig in Australia is but a drop in the ocean compared to the natural oil seepage that goes on all over the world. Woods Hole Oceanographic estimates the seepage off the California coast far exceeds the Exxon Valdez spill – by as much as 80 times!

Slow down the stampede Mr. Littlepage? What stampede? It is like watching paint dry trying to get some oil drilling done in this country. The only charade going on is in your imagination. Get out of the way and let the oil companies go to work for God's sake!

PS. The "DIE" has been cast, not "DYE". A die is a mold, a dye is a coloring agent.

[Login Or Register To Post Comments](#) [Flag As Offensive](#)



**Action & Compromise.....**

Submitted by [north miami](#) on Mon. 10/26/2009 at 4:35 pm

"A politician need never apologize for opportunism in action, but he should always be ashamed of compromise in thought."- Walter Bagehot

Caring, knowledgeable and concerned citizens would like to see this issue handled by the best leaders but they can't be found in Tallahassee.

[Login Or Register To Post Comments](#) [Flag As Offensive](#)

**FIND IT!**

Powered by [Local.com](#)  [Find It!](#)

<a href="#">Apartments</a>	<a href="#">Beauty Salons</a>	<a href="#">Insurance</a>	<a href="#">Realtors</a>
<a href="#">Attorneys</a>	<a href="#">Car Rental</a>	<a href="#">Loans</a>	<a href="#">Restaurants</a>
<a href="#">Auto Dealers</a>	<a href="#">Dentists</a>	<a href="#">Mortgages</a>	<a href="#">Storage</a>
<a href="#">Auto Parts</a>	<a href="#">Doctors</a>	<a href="#">Movers</a>	<a href="#">Tax Preparation</a>
<a href="#">Auto Repair</a>	<a href="#">Flowers</a>	<a href="#">Pizza</a>	<a href="#">Travel</a>
	<a href="#">Hotels</a>		<a href="#">More...</a>

1 Riverside Ave. Jacksonville, FL 32202 © Copyright The Florida Times-Union. All Rights Reserved. [Privacy Policy](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Advertising](#) |

[About Our Ads](#)