



NEWS RELEASE

2327 East Franklin Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55406
TEL: 612-659-9124 FAX: 612-659-9129 www.northstar.sierraclub.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Sept. 8, 2008

CONTACT: Cesia Kearns, Sierra Club Organizer
612-659-9124 ext. 310
Mobile: 612-310-2649
Email: cesia.kearns@sierraclub.org

Will Steger and Duluth Residents Call on Congress for Clean Energy Policy Offshore Drilling Offers No Relief at the Pump

Duluth, MN– As Congress considers various proposals that would weaken decades of coastal protections and allow offshore drilling in protected waters, a large crowd of Duluth citizens gathered with Will Steger along the harbor yesterday with a “Clean Energy -No Drilling” message. This gathering was an example of Americans’ desire across the country to see Congress pass a plan that invests in clean, renewable energy options that would reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and provide long term solutions and relief at the pump.

Will Steger, the famous Arctic explorer featured at the rally, expressed hope that Congress will lead the transition to a clean energy future. “The biggest economic opportunity we’ve ever had is right before us. We can lead the world in a transformation to a clean energy economy, but we can’t get there with policies of the past that allow for more drilling and bigger profits for oil companies.”

High gas prices have left America’s beaches and coastal waters square in the sights of Congress, even as millions of Americans return from summer beach and fishing vacations. There is a broad and well-funded campaign being led by the oil and gas industries as well as the agriculture and manufacturing industries to end the 25-year old moratoria that has protected our Atlantic and Pacific coasts from new offshore oil and gas drilling.

“Duluth is a testament to why we should embrace clean energy solutions, not sacrifice our coastal treasures and favorite beaches,” said John Doberstein, Sierra Club volunteer and Duluth resident. “Destroying our beaches with oil drilling will do nothing to ease pain at the pump for regular Americans. It will only help Big Oil rake in billions of dollars in record profits.”

“Offshore oil and gas drilling is the slowest, dirtiest and most expensive way to meet America’s energy needs,” furthered Doberstein, “Opening our coasts to destructive drilling would do little to lower prices or make us more energy independent, but it would threaten our beaches with pollution and potential oil spills, and destroy billion-dollar tourism and fishing industries.”

According to the Energy Information Administration, oil and gas from new offshore drilling wouldn’t be available for at least seven years and still wouldn’t be more than a quick fix. The U.S. consumes 25% of the world’s oil but sits on less than 3% of oil reserves.

“The debate about drilling is a distraction from implementing real, clean energy solutions to global warming right now.” added Steger. “There are faster, cheaper, cleaner and longer-term energy solutions like energy efficiency and clean, renewable energy that will start saving families and businesses money today and protect our coastal waters, beaches and economies.”

Making our homes, offices, cars and trucks more efficient will save energy and money today and far into the future. “We can’t drill our way to lower gas prices, but we can kick our oil addiction,” commented Doberstein.

(continued)



NEWS RELEASE

2327 East Franklin Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55406
TEL: 612-659-9124 FAX: 612-659-9129 www.northstar.sierraclub.org

Clean energy solutions are already being implemented across the nation to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and solve global warming. Duluth is considered a “Cool City,” one of hundreds of cities across the country that have signed on to the Mayor’s Climate Protection Agreement in an effort to reduce global warming pollutants through renewable and energy efficient measures, such as hybrid car fleets and LED bulbs in stoplights.

While coastal states cope with the current threats and aftermaths of tropical storms and hurricane Gustav, the vulnerabilities of offshore oil and gas drilling are thrust into the spotlight. Such storms in recent years caused massive spills of oil and other pollutants that affected production, refinery capacity, and price of oil in the U.S.

“The vulnerabilities of offshore drilling only further highlight why our coastlines are worth protecting,” commented Doberstein, “Smart energy policy is about reducing the need for oil through cleaner, more efficient energy systems - not increasing the risk to our coastlines by giving in to Big Oil.”

The Duluth crowd, including people of all ages and even some enthusiastic polar bears, cheered on Steger’s comments and finished the event by taking out their cell phones and calling their Congress members to express support for a bold renewable energy plan that protects coasts from offshore drilling. Congress may take up a vote on the energy proposals and the potential for offshore drilling as early as this week.

###