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OFFICE OF
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**COASTAL MAYORS MEET WITH WHITE HOUSE OFFICIALS ON OFFSHORE OIL
DRILLING, BELIEVE MAJOR DECISION IS IMMINENT**

Charleston, S.C.— After a daylong series of bipartisan meetings with White House and Congressional staff members today in Washington, DC, Mayor John Tecklenburg of Charleston and Mayor Billy Keyserling of Beaufort believe that a major announcement is imminent with regard to the issue of oil exploration and drilling off the South Carolina coast.

At issue is whether South Carolina and other South Atlantic states will remain on the list of states the Interior Department has proposed to open up to offshore drilling in its latest five-year plan.

"Everyone we spoke to today seemed to understand and appreciate our deep concerns about the dangers that offshore drilling would pose to our environment, our economy and our citizens' quality of life here along the South Carolina coast," Mayor Tecklenburg said. "And while there were no specific promises made, we came away from our meetings very hopeful that we will soon see major movement in the right direction on this issue."

The two coastal South Carolina mayors were accompanied to their meetings by representatives of several major conservation organizations, including the South Carolina Wildlife Federation and Audubon SC. Over the course of the day, the delegation met with senior administration officials in both the President and Vice President's offices, as well as several SC Congressional delegation staffers.

"These were very positive meetings," Mayor Keyserling said. "We came here today representing the broadest possible coalition of citizens and groups -- Oceana, the Wildlife Federation, Audubon SC, the Conservation Voters of South Carolina, the South Carolina Small Business Chamber of Commerce and the 110 coastal towns and cities that have passed resolutions formally opposing this plan. And I hope and believe that we made real progress toward protecting our beaches, our businesses and our communities from the unnecessary and unwarranted perils of offshore oil drilling in our state."

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