

Wary of offshore drilling

NY sees threat to LI's 'ocean economy'

BY JOAN GRALLA
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Long Island's coast and "ocean economy" must be safeguarded from potentially ruinous drilling for oil and gas in the Atlantic Ocean or Long Island Sound, a state park advisory body said.

Bryan Erwin, who chairs the commission, said by phone, "If the environment is polluted, corrupted, or disrupted, obviously, it's going to be a lousy park experience for our patrons and all the water-facing parkland we have."

Noting the oil drillers would need to build "massive infrastructure," including roads, storage tanks, pipelines, processing and other facilities, the Long Island State Park, Recreation and Historic Preservation Commission issued a March 12 resolution opposing the leases "to ensure the preservation of parks and beaches on Long Island."

U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke proposed selling 47 drilling leases in the outer continental shelf that rings the nation.

Under the five-year plan, two leases would be offered in New York's mid-Atlantic area, according to Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo.

Just days after Zinke exempted Florida, Cuomo called on the Trump administration to also shield New York, saying the leases posed an "unacceptable threat" to coastal resources.

Other governors also have sought exemptions. Coastal state legislatures — including New York — introduced bills blocking oil and gas infrastructure from being erected or transiting the first 3 miles of the outer continental shelf they control, according to The Associated Press.

Two weeks ago, federal officials attending a Town of Brookhaven hearing were told

the drilling would prove catastrophic for the economy and environment.

The Obama administration barred drilling in sections of the Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic oceans.

By expanding fracking — injecting liquid at high pressure into subterranean rocks to extract oil or gas — however, the Obama administration spurred a boom in U.S. oil output; it topped 10 million barrels for the first time since 1970, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

This has led critics to say offshore leases are not needed.

"That is a false argument," a Department of the Interior spokeswoman said by email.

"Suggesting we don't need energy source A because we have energy source B is shortsighted." She added: "Offshore production represents about a fifth of our nation's oil production and is just one tool in our energy toolbox to keep prices competitive for American fami-

lies and businesses."

The EIA also forecast new solar and wind plants will produce nearly 70 gigawatts of electricity from 2017 to 2021. One gigawatt can power 100 million LED bulbs, it says.

The Long Island commissioners' resolution calculated offshore drilling could cost the state nearly 320,000 jobs and billions of dollars from tourism and fishing industries. "Overall, New York's ocean economy generates \$11 billion in wages and contributes \$23 billion in gross domestic product," it added.

In its report, the Department of the Interior estimated "ocean-dependent tourism" contributed \$33.9 billion to New York's economy.

BP estimates it has paid approximately \$65 billion to settle its liabilities for the Deepwater Horizon fire in 2010 in the Gulf of Mexico. That blaze and explosion killed 11 workers — and untold numbers of marine animals — and crippled recreation and fishing for years.

HONORING A MAN IN HARMONY WITH ROOSEVELT

BY KHRISTOPHER J. BROOKS
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The Roosevelt Public Library used its annual women's celebration event to honor an accomplished musician who is reviving a high school band program.

Frank Abel, 72, a former band leader at Uniondale High School, came out of retirement in 2016 to lead Roosevelt High School's band. For the first time in 22 years, Roosevelt's band played in the Newsday Marching Band Festival in October. This May, the band is set to play at Riverside Church in Manhattan.

When Abel first took the Roosevelt job, the program had 35 students. By this September, Abel said, it will reach 110.

"There's a real sense of pride with the program now," said Nichelle Rivers, the grants and funded programs director at the Roosevelt Union Free School District. "The students feel like they're part of something special. Mr. Abel instills that in them."

Abel has spent 29 years as a band director, professional musician and music educator. He is a long-standing trustee on the li-



Nichelle Rivers' portrait of Frank Abel brought the Roosevelt High School band director to tears.

brary's governing board. And for those accomplishments, Roosevelt's African-American community packed the library auditorium on Saturday to honor him.

Librarian Carol Gilliam said Abel has donated his time and music equipment to the library. His push for government funding helped pay for renovations in the building. "He is responsible for the beautiful room we're sitting in today," Gilliam told the crowd of about 100.

During the library's women's

tea, Rivers unveiled her purple and gold portrait of Abel. The image shows a younger Frank Abel with chiseled biceps playing a keyboard with a microphone at his lips. Abel stared at the painting, wiped away a tear, then smiled.

"This type of honor makes me cry, so just bear with me — I'm a mushy guy inside," he said.

Rivers said her painting was a labor of love that took months to complete.

In his keynote address, and in

it, Abel challenged the audience to be more active in Roosevelt by becoming a mentor, volunteer or being someone who gives advice to someone in need.

He also told the crowd that there's a special place in his heart for Roosevelt, New York.

"I have worked all over the country, and as some of you may know, I have worked all over the world," he said. "And each and every time, the road leads me back home — back to Roosevelt."

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CORRECTION

The Sunday night daily number, Win4, Midday daily and Midday Win4 were incorrect in Monday's editions. The correct numbers were: Daily number 033, Win4 9763, Midday daily 786 and Midday Win4 1238.

THIS DATE IN HISTORY

- 1513** Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de León sighted present-day Florida.
- 1912** First lady Helen Herron Taft and the wife of Japan's ambassador to the United States, Viscountess Chinda, planted the first two of 3,000 cherry trees given to the U.S. as a gift by the mayor of Tokyo.
- 1958** Nikita Khrushchev became Soviet premier in addition to First Secretary of the Communist Party.
- 1964** Alaska was hit by a magnitude 9.2 earthquake (the strongest on record in North America) and tsunamis that together claimed about 130 lives.
- 1968** Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, the first man to orbit the Earth in 1961, died when his MiG-15 jet crashed during a routine training flight near Moscow; he was 34.
- 1977** In aviation's worst disaster, 583 people were killed when a KLM Boeing 747, attempting to take off in heavy fog, crashed into a Pan Am 747 on an airport runway on the Canary Island of Tenerife.
- 1998** The Food and Drug Administration approved the drug Viagra, made by Pfizer, saying it had helped about two-thirds of impotent men improve their sexual function.