

## **Questions from Rep. McEachin for Tom Kies, President of the Business Alliance for Protecting the Atlantic Coast**

1. Can you speak to the devastating impact that a potential oil spill could have on the tourism industry, and why permanent offshore drilling prohibitions are critical for the long-term health of coastal economies?

### **Response from Mr. Tom Kies to Rep. McEachin**

Here in Carteret County, North Carolina, where I'm the president of our county's chamber of commerce, we've seen record breaking numbers for our coastal tourism. Even after the multiple hurricanes we've endured, the visitors continue to come because of the clean ocean and clean beaches.

During the pandemic, more visitors than ever came to our county, because the beaches are a safe place to be. Even during the time of Covid-19 the clean ocean and clean beaches are still here.

But if there's an oil spill, the beaches will be unusable, and you won't be able to swim or fish in the ocean. Without the beaches and clean water, the tourists will cease to come.

It's estimated that lost tourism revenue in Louisiana due to the BP *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill was \$32 million by the end of 2010 and a total of \$153 million through 2013. The Gulf of Mexico commercial fishing industry is estimated to have lost \$247 million as a result of post-spill fisheries closures. The damage felt from this oil spill lasted for years.

The clean coast economy on the Atlantic coast supports roughly 1.75 million jobs and generates nearly \$137 billion in GDP through businesses like hotels, restaurants, charter boats, gas stations, and guide businesses.

We can survive hurricanes and pandemics because we still have our beaches and clean water. If we have an oil spill, it would be devastating to our economy. We saw it happen in the Gulf of Mexico. We don't want it to happen here on the Atlantic Coast.