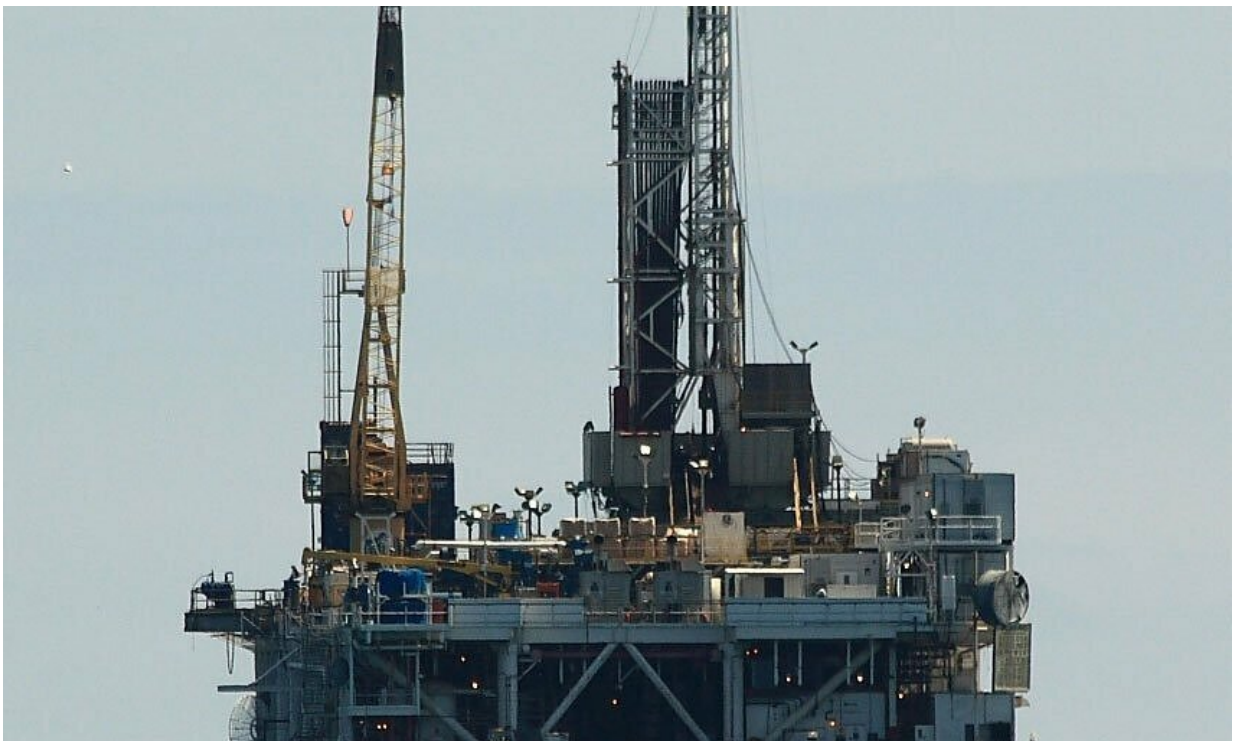


Drilling will stop on controversial oil well 150 miles from South Florida after company finds the well too dry

February 10 2021, by Chris Perkins



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A company will stop drilling a controversial oil well it started in December about 150 miles from the South Florida coast, after saying it did not find a valuable oil source.

Bahamas Petroleum Company began drilling the exploratory well off the west coast of Andros Island on Dec. 20, despite wide criticism from Bahamian conservation groups as well as a group of U.S. Representatives led by Alcee Hastings.

After six weeks of drilling, the company said it found oil, but a not a commercial quantity of it. BPC plans to plug and abandon the well in the next few days and move its drillship, Stena IceMax, away from the site.

The Port of Palm Beach was used as a hub for a supply ship assisting the Stena IceMax during its drilling.

The project drew concern in Florida over the possibility that a spill could cause major problems for tourism, fishing, diving, coral reefs, wildlife and the environment, particularly in South Florida and the Florida Keys.

The drilling shutdown is good news for the project's opposition.

"Offshore drilling in the Bahamas is dangerous for both the country's tourism-driven economy and its pristine waters," said Diane Hoskins, offshore drilling campaign director for Oceana, an international organization that advocates for ocean conservation.

"We hope the Bahamian government takes this as a sign to stop this senseless journey. The United States and the Bahamas have a shared interest in preventing the associated devastation to our climate, coastal communities and economy."

Despite the victory for conservationists, the battle isn't over. BPC said it hasn't yet decided whether or not to drill in the area again in the future, saying its focus now is to shut down the well it was working on.

"This is a huge breath of fresh air for the future sustainability of our

country," said Casuarina McKinney-Lambert, executive director of the Bahamas Reef Environment Educational Foundation. "But the threat is not over because BPC is still hoping to drill additional wells in Bahamian waters. We absolutely need permanent protection from any oil exploration or extraction in the future."

McKinney-Lambert said the [drilling](#) caused "considerable damage to the seafloor and was a clear threat to our waters and our economy and that of our neighbors."

BPC said it hasn't yet conducted a final report but doesn't believe there was any significant amount of harmful material leaked into the water. Still, some want the Bahamian government to take strong action so no more exploratory oil wells are drilled off its coasts.

"We now need a full moratorium on oil exploration in Bahamian waters," McKinney-Lambert said. "This will send the message to the world that we take protection of our environment seriously, that we care about the current and future well-being of our people, and that we are serious about building a climate-resilient future."

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