

Lake Worth group forms human chain to protest offshore drilling

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It was a perfect day for a protest.

About 300 children and adults, surfers and activists made a peaceful human chain along the shoreline early Saturday afternoon at the Lake Worth Municipal Beach for "Hands Across the Sand" in a show of opposition to offshore oil drilling off the Florida Coast.

Temperatures fighting their way up into the 60s and west/northwest winds at 15-20 mph added up to conditions bordering on nippy. But the skies were sunny and clear, and the 4- to 6-foot waves created an eye-catching setting with the deep aquamarine water.

Some protesters arrived barefoot or in flip-flops. Others wore winter boots and leather jackets or hooded sweatshirts. But their unifying factor was the color black, as in the oil they fear would soil the beach if drilling were allowed.

The local event, preceded by a beach cleanup, was organized by the Palm Beach County chapter of the Surfrider Foundation. The nonprofit group is dedicated to "the protection and enjoyment of the world's oceans, beaches and waves for all people, through conservation, activism, research and education," its mission statement says.

Similar demonstrations were staged around the state.

"We're passing along a message to local governments," said Todd Rimmel, vice chairman of the chapter.

He said the gathering was designed to boost awareness and address what the group considers "disregard of our fragile environment and shared resources" by local politicians from Palm Beach County to Tallahassee to Washington, D.C.

The foundation and other environmentalists oppose any legislative efforts to allow any drilling in Florida's coastal waters.



Meghan McCarthy

[\(enlarge photo\)](#)

About 300 people participated in 'Hands Across the Sand' at Lake Worth beach Saturday in protest of proposed offshore oil drilling.

The protesters took their places south of the William O. Lockhart Municipal Pier and then waited for a small private plane to buzz by as it shot video. The plane was delayed about a half-hour, but the crowd did not thin much during the wait.

Jennifer Olivia Beckerman of suburban Boca Raton had been planning an outing for her three children this weekend.

"I wanted to take the kids out for a special Valentine's Day," she said. "We were going to pick up litter on the beach anyway."

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