



The Southern Alliance for Clean Energy

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Amendment 9 endorsed by Winter the dolphin, pro surfer Cory Lopez

CLEARWATER, Fla. — Whether they surf or swim, Floridians across the state are rallying behind Amendment 9, which would ban offshore oil and gas drilling in Florida’s state waters if passed by 60 percent of voters in this November’s election.

Endorsements include the Clearwater Marine Aquarium’s world-famous dolphin, Winter — star of the *Dolphin Tale* and *Dolphin Tale 2* movies — and elite professional surfer Cory Lopez, a three-time X Games Gold Medalist and U.S. Open of Surfing Champion.

“Winter supports Amendment 9 because voting ‘yes’ on 9 means avoiding the inevitable oil spills and marine wildlife deaths that come with offshore drilling,” said David Yates, CEO of the Clearwater Marine Aquarium, which is home to Winter. “After the 2010 BP oil spill, dolphin deaths were four times historic rates in parts of the Gulf, and thousands of sea turtles died.”

In a [video](#) produced by the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, Winter can be seen nodding “yes” in support of Amendment 9, which would protect our coasts. As spokesmammal for the [Vote Yes on 9 campaign](#), the 13-year-old bottlenose dolphin believes she represents the needs of the dolphin species well by encouraging Florida voters to vote “yes” on Amendment 9.

Professional surfer and Florida native Cory Lopez has also endorsed the amendment. In a [video](#) with his three children, the three-time X Games Gold Medalist asks Floridians to “please protect Florida’s beaches.”

“Our beautiful beaches and oceans are the best part of calling Florida home,” Lopez said. “That’s why we need to vote ‘yes’ on 9 to protect them from the dangers of oil spills.”

More than sea creatures and surfers are voicing their support for Amendment 9. A growing, diverse [list of organizations](#) has endorsed the amendment, including nonprofit organizations, businesses and public health groups.

The constitutional amendment bundles two provisions: The first to place a ban in the Florida Constitution on offshore oil and gas drilling in state waters, and the second is to update an existing constitutional provision adopted in 2002, which banned workplace smoking. It would be updated to include vaping devices, such as e-cigarettes. Health advocates remind us that no one should have to choose between a paycheck and breathing clean air.

When it comes to offshore drilling, a “yes” vote on Amendment 9 would be a vote to ban drilling within three nautical miles from the shore on the Atlantic coast and nine nautical miles on the Gulf coast.

Susan Glickman, Florida Director of the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, said that while there is already a law preventing near-shore drilling in Florida’s state waters, it’s too easy to reverse, and state lawmakers tried to do just that in 2009. A “yes” vote will place the ban in the state Constitution — a more permanent solution to prevent drilling in Florida’s state waters.

“Winter and Cory are right,” Glickman said. “Florida needs Amendment 9 to ensure long-term protection of Florida’s oceans, beaches and marine life — as well as the tourism that comes along with them and drives our state’s economy.”

It’s more important than ever that we pass Amendment 9, Glickman added. The Washington Post [reported](#) this week that a 14-year-long oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico is on the verge of becoming one of the biggest in U.S. history — rivaling BP’s 2010 Deepwater Horizon disaster — at a time when the federal government is proposing the largest expansion of leases for the oil and gas industry in U.S. history.

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Southern Alliance for Clean Energy is a nonprofit organization, founded in 1985, that promotes responsible energy choices to ensure clean, safe, and healthy communities throughout the Southeast. Learn more at www.cleanenergy.org.