



Florida House of Representatives
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**FLORIDA HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADERS COMMISSIONED
FLAWED STUDY OF DRILLING RISKS**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. -- Florida House Democratic Leader Franklin Sands (D-Weston) released the following statement today regarding a study commissioned by the Florida House of Representatives to assess the risks of oil and gas drilling off Florida's coast:

“With a massive offshore oil spill threatening the ecosystems of Florida and Gulf Coast states, it is with great disappointment that Florida citizens learn that Republican leaders authorized spending \$200,000 of taxpayer money to commission a report that radically downplays risks of major oil spills and overstates the energy industry's ability to contain damage from such incidents.

“In its April 9, 2010 report, Willis Structured Risk Solutions offered a deceptive analysis to conclude that the risk of a blowout is very low.

“In an inadequate defense of why House Speaker Larry Cretul authorized the spending, a spokeswoman reportedly characterized the report as a `rush job' and acknowledged that Representative Cretul commissioned the study at the request of Representative Dean Cannon, the Orlando-area Republican who is in line to be the next Republican leader of the Florida House of Representatives.

“News media reports remind us that Representative Cannon thanked the Willis Group during its presentation to the Florida House for what he called ‘extraordinary great work’ and signaled that the company would continue to be relied upon by House Republican leaders.

“While it is crucial that Floridians understand the risks associated with drilling, I find it troubling that House Republican leadership exercised such poor judgment in their unrelenting quest to open Florida’s waters to drilling. Furthermore, Floridians deserve an explanation as to where House Republicans found the \$200,000 to finance this study.”

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