

Direzione per la Salvaguardia Ambientale del Ministero dell'Ambiente e della tutela del territorio e del mare
Attenzione: Northern Petroleum- concessione D30 GR-NP e D505 GR-NP
Via Cristoforo Colombo 44
00147 Roma

Direzione Generale della Pesca Marittima e dell'Acquacoltura del Ministero delle Politiche Agricole Alimentari e Forestali
Attenzione: Northern Petroleum- concessione D30 GR-NP e D505 GR-NP Via dell'Arte, 16 - 00144 - Roma

e per conoscenza

Ministero per i Beni e le Attivita' Culturali
Direzione Generale per la Qualita' e la Tutela del Paesaggio e l'Arte Contemporanea
Via S. Michele, 22
00153 – ROMA

Dear representatives of the Italian government:

I am writing to you to recommend that you deny authorization to the drilling permits D30 GR-NP e D505 GR-NP as filed to your office by Northern Petroleum, based in London.

These permits would allow a British company to drill heavy sour oil about 20 km from shore in one of the most beautiful seas of the Mediterranean, along the Sicilian coast, and would be the beginning of the transformation of Italy into an oil district.

The company itself acknowledges in its environmental statement that the oil rig will be clearly visible from shore, that polluting chemicals will be used, that large quantities of waste waters will have to be transported and treated onshore, and that fishing activities will be affected. Most likely, industrial facilities will have to be built on land, turning a touristic place into an oil processing location. The people of Sicily stand to gain very little in return, since the oil will be sold on the open market and since Italian royalties are among the lowest in the world - about 4% of all profits, which will mostly end up in Roman coffers.

We have all seen the devastation caused by the massive BP oil spill and we believe that the Ministry should follow the directive of the European

commissioner for energy, Gunther Oettinger, who on July 7th 2010, proposed a moratorium on deepwater drilling throughout Europe. Furthermore, Italy ratified the Aarhus treaty, which guarantees public participation and calls for the will of the people to be heard in all environmental matters.

Having visited Louisiana a number of times over the course of my academic career as a mathematician, and for many years having closely followed the environmental challenges faced in the United States, I am keenly aware of the dangers of off shore drilling and the need for energy production from renewable resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chad M. Houghton-Topaz".

St. Paul, February 4th 2012

Chad Topaz
Associate Professor of Mathematics
Macalester College
St. Paul, MN
USA