



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **STATEMENT BY FRLA PRESIDENT AND CEO CAROL DOVER ON FLORIDA OFFSHORE DRILLING LEGISLATION**

(Tallahassee, FL) – “The Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association (FRLA) is closely monitoring legislation filed by both the Florida Senate and the Florida House of Representatives on the issue of oil and gas exploration in the Gulf of Mexico. Although it appears unlikely that offshore drilling will be passed into law this year, FRLA is prepared to be actively engaged should the measure be brought before the Florida Legislature in the final weeks of Session.

“Florida’s hospitality industry depends upon maintaining pristine ecological systems for tourism and travel. Our state’s economic stability depends on a strong tourism base of which the hospitality industry is a foundation. In 2008, Florida’s tourism industry generated \$65.2 billion in direct economic impact and \$3.9 billion in tax revenue. With more than 84.5 million visitors annually, there are more than 1.5 million visitors in Florida on any given day. It is the state’s largest private employer with more than one million Floridian’s directly employed, generating a payroll of \$16 billion.

“While the issue has been discussed over recent months in local town hall meetings and forums, many questions still remain. We strongly encourage our elected officials to take a measured and thoughtful approach in order to ensure that a fair and accurate assessment of the facts is openly debated. We ask members of our Association who oppose oil and gas exploration in the Gulf of Mexico to contact their local Senator and Representative within the next two weeks to let them know we will not support any measure that would be detrimental to Florida’s tourism and hospitality industry.”

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### **About FRLA:**

In existence since 1946, the Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association is Florida’s premier nonprofit, hospitality industry trade association. FRLA safeguards the needs of the hospitality industry, improves the business climate, promotes the highest levels of quality and safety for our patrons, provides legislative advocacy, and eases navigation of government regulation. The Association represents and serves more than 10,000 independent and household name members, including theme parks and the largest casual theme restaurant company in the world. For more information, please go to [www.FRLA.org](http://www.FRLA.org).