

Offshore plan hits Fla. Senate roadblock

by UPI

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. -- Florida state senators and Gov. Charlie Crist say a move to open up state waters to offshore oil drilling has run out of time in the legislative session.

Florida Senate President Jeff Atwater, R-North Palm Beach, told reporters shortly after the House voted Monday to approve an offshore drilling measure the proposal came too late in the session for a full consideration, The Miami Herald reported.

"I'm not receptive to it," Atwater said. "That is a really, significantly important issue. It'd be very difficult to imagine that's part of an end game for this session."

Crist Monday also told the Herald he was troubled by the "lateness of the hour" as well as by the "closeness to shore" of the bill's provisions, which would allow drilling between 3 and 10 miles off Florida's Gulf of Mexico coastline.

The measure was backed by a group called Florida Energy Associates, reportedly comprised of independent oil companies, and was championed by Rep. Dean Cannon, R-Winter Park, who said it would be a boon for the state's depleted tax coffers, the newspaper reported.

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