

Is Offshore Drilling on Our Horizon?

Within hours of the Deepwater Horizon oil rig explosion in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, media outlets across the country were trying to reach UNH's Nancy Kinner. A month later, she was testifying before Congress. Now the professor of civil and environmental engineering and expert in oil spill response and restoration has become a media go-to for questions regarding the Trump administration's move to open Atlantic waters to offshore drilling exploration, and what would have to happen for a plan to move forward. "The key question is exactly where would that drilling occur?" Kinner says. "Unless conditions change a lot, the New Hampshire coast probably would not be the first place where drilling would be desirable — for a lot of factors."

Among those are determining that sufficient amounts of oil exist, getting a production rig out there and having the infrastructure to deliver oil being produced. "In the Gulf of Mexico, for example, a lot of that oil is pumped back onshore through pipelines. On the East Coast, we don't have any offshore wells or the infrastructure. And that is a major investment," Kinner explains.

Even before that, Kinner says, the process to move forward with any plan for leases would be a lengthy one. "We're talking years even without any court cases," she says. But, she stresses, a

long approval process does not mean there isn't reason for concern. "I am saying there will be a process, and we need to be paying attention to that process."

The potential for a spill could prove to be a financial deterrent to expansion as well. "Oil companies have to have a plan for that as part of this process. They have to be able to show the ability to control if something goes wrong," Kinner says. "Industry invested in a capping stack for the Gulf of Mexico. We don't have that



infrastructure anywhere off the Atlantic coast. This will be highly scrutinized."

Could drilling happen?

"Yes, it could," Kinner says. "Could it happen in the next couple of years? Probably not." ♦

— Jennifer Saunders



NEW SEA GRANT LEADERSHIP

Erik Chapman has been appointed the new full-time director of New Hampshire Sea Grant (NHSG), a position he has held on an interim basis since 2016. As director, Chapman will be responsible for the administration and promotion of NHSG through collaboration and partnerships with the academic and research community in New Hampshire and beyond. "I am extremely excited to work with our incredibly talented staff, our UNH partners and the broader off-campus community to address a fundamental societal challenge: to sustain coastal economies, a high quality of life and conserve healthy coastal ecosystems despite ever-increasing and compounding environmental threats," Chapman says.

JEREMY GASOWSKI / UNH

The (Wild)cat in the Hat

It's not exactly Michael Jackson's white glove, but at UNH, the red hat worn by professor Nancy Kinner — a rock star in her own right — has become iconic.

There aren't any sequins, but there is a feather. And a red satin ribbon. Kinner has been wearing the hat (if not the same exact one, a variation) for the last 30 years. It has gotten so she doesn't

feel like herself, or look like herself, without it.

It all started with a colleague who loved to shop. The pair met in England while Kinner was doing a fellowship. They later applied for a grant together that brought him to the United States, where they conducted wastewater treatment studies along the East Coast.

"Every time we went on a trip, he shopped,"

says Kinner. One excursion here in New Hampshire took them into a little store on Route 4. A red hat was hanging on the wall. "He saw it and said, 'Oh, Nancy, you have to get that, it's you.' I've worn it ever since."

Or one very much like it. Kinner has accumulated a collection that includes a couple of baseball hats, a knit beanie, a few variations of the felt fedora, and

the red tasseled tam that she wears at commencement. She also has a red bike helmet.

On a few rare occasions, Kinner has been somewhere off campus bareheaded and run into a student that she doesn't know but who will say, "Oh, I know you — you wear the red hat."

It's her signature. Just like those white sequin gloves. ♦

— Jody Record '95