

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 44

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that an effective moratorium by the Executive Branch on offshore oil and gas exploration and drilling should be terminated.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 19, 2011

Mr. BURTON of Indiana (for himself, Mrs. BACHMANN, Mr. OLSON, Mr. CRAWFORD, Mr. HUELSKAMP, Mr. LONG, Mr. CRITZ, Mr. POMPEO, Mr. McCLINTOCK, Mr. WITTMAN, Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, and Mr. PAUL) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that an effective moratorium by the Executive Branch on offshore oil and gas exploration and drilling should be terminated.

Whereas the Secretary of the Interior is required to prepare a five-year leasing plan that governs any offshore oil and gas leasing establishing a schedule of proposed lease sales, providing the timing, size, and general location of the leasing activities;

Whereas Secretary of the Interior Salazar announced December 1, 2010, that the Department of the Interior will not propose any new oil drilling in waters off the East Coast,

West Coast, or Eastern Gulf of Mexico for at least the next seven years;

Whereas further restricting areas for oil and gas exploration and drilling will not change the demand for oil in the United States and will result in greater dependence on foreign, imported oil;

Whereas a recent estimate places total job losses by 2014 at 120,000 as a result of delaying or preventing drilling off the Gulf Coast, and these job losses would extend beyond the oil and natural gas industry and negatively impact businesses and communities throughout the Gulf Coast region;

Whereas oil and natural gas currently supply approximately 60 percent of our national energy needs, including 99 percent of the fuel used by Americans in their cars and trucks;

Whereas oil and natural gas are still going to be a part of our energy mix for a long time to come and we must be able to access our own resources rather than becoming more dependent on unstable parts of the world;

Whereas recent technological advances have made the extraction of our domestic natural gas reserves environmentally safe and economically feasible;

Whereas offshore oil and natural gas development has been safely conducted for more than 60 years, and during that time, more than 42,000 wells have been drilled in the Gulf, including more than 2,000 deepwater wells, which are wells drilled in water depths of 1,000 feet or more;

Whereas according to the American Petroleum Institute, in the past 60 years, America's oil and natural gas industry

has produced more than 16.3 billion barrels of oil in the Gulf of Mexico with just 0.00123 percent spilled;

Whereas, industry-wide, a 2009 American Petroleum Institute-commissioned report found that annual spillage from offshore operations decreased by 87 percent from the 1970s;

Whereas the Gulf of Mexico accounts for 30 percent of our domestic oil production and 13 percent of natural gas, the deepwater areas account for 80 percent of the Gulf's oil production and 45 percent of its natural gas production, and 20 of the highest-producing leases are in the deep water;

Whereas additional drilling for oil and gas is not a complete solution to our Nation's energy needs, and expanding the areas where environmentally safe offshore drilling can take place will help move the United States in the direction of greater energy independence;

Whereas steady, safe, dependable development of domestic oil and gas is critical to our Nation's energy and national security needs;

Whereas it is estimated that at least 18 billion barrels of oil exist untouched within areas that the United States has restricted from drilling, and this is equivalent to nearly 30 years' worth of current imports of oil from our second largest foreign source of oil, Saudi Arabia;

Whereas the United States imports 10 million barrels of crude oil every day and 1.3 million barrels of refined gasoline;

Whereas Venezuela is a major supplier of foreign oil to the United States, providing almost 11 percent of U.S. crude oil imports, and Venezuela was the third largest foreign

supplier of oil products to the United States in 2009 (after Canada and Mexico), exporting about 1 million barrels per day of crude oil and products to the United States;

Whereas United States money is going overseas for oil, much to countries hostile to us; and

Whereas the United States needs to act reasonably to ensure safe expansion of future production, and further restricting responsible and environmentally safe oil and gas exploration threatens the economic growth of the United States that requires a safe, secure energy supply: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the House of Rep-
2 representatives that—

3 (1) it should be the policy of the United States
4 to allow for the development of offshore oil and gas-
5 rich areas in an environmentally responsible manner;

6 (2) the Department of the Interior should
7 promptly complete environmental analysis related to
8 offshore leasing activities, including the 2007–2012
9 Outer Continental Shelf Leasing Program and any
10 other analysis related to litigation over the program,
11 VA Sale 220, geological and geophysical activity
12 (seismic) work in the Atlantic Planning Areas, and
13 the 2012–2017 Outer Continental Shelf Leasing
14 Program;

15 (3) the Department of the Interior should
16 promptly rescind its December 1, 2010, announce-

1 ment that the Government will not propose any new
2 oil drilling in waters off the East Coast, West Coast,
3 or Eastern Gulf of Mexico for at least the next seven
4 years;

5 (4) the Department of the Interior should expedite the processing and approval of both deepwater
6 and shallow water drilling permits, exploration
7 plans, development operations coordination documents, and development and production plans; and

10 (5) the Department of the Interior should allow
11 new lease sales in all permissible areas of the Outer
12 Continental Shelf, including the Gulf of Mexico,
13 Alaska, and Atlantic areas.

○