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H. R. 9472

To enhance national security and energy independence through comprehensive offshore energy resource assessment and mapping, to establish a framework for the regular review and standardization of offshore resource exploration methodologies, to streamline the permitting process for offshore geological and geophysical surveys, and to provide for related purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 6, 2024

Mr. HUNT (for himself and Mr. NEHLS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, Armed Services, and the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To enhance national security and energy independence through comprehensive offshore energy resource assessment and mapping, to establish a framework for the regular review and standardization of offshore resource exploration methodologies, to streamline the permitting process for offshore geological and geophysical surveys, and to provide for related purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Comprehensive Off-
3 shore Resource Enhancement Act of 2024” or the “CORE
4 Act”.

5 **SEC. 2. SECURITY ASSESSMENT OF OFFSHORE ENERGY RE-**
6 **SOURCE RESERVES.**

7 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

8 (1) SECRETARIES.—The term “Secretaries”
9 means the Secretary of Energy, the Secretary of the
10 Interior, and the Secretary of Defense.

11 (2) UNDISCOVERED RESOURCE.—The term
12 “undiscovered resource” means an oil and gas re-
13 source postulated, on the basis of geologic knowledge
14 or theory, to exist outside of known fields or accu-
15 mulations.

16 (b) RESOURCE SECURITY ASSESSMENT COLLABORA-
17 TION PROGRAM.—To enhance United States national se-
18 curity and energy independence, the Secretaries shall es-
19 tablish a joint program (referred to in this section as the
20 “program”) for offshore geophysical and geological re-
21 source mapping and analysis of domestic resources critical
22 to national security.

23 (c) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the program is to en-
24 sure adequate intelligence on the supply and security of
25 offshore energy resources of reliance to the domestic popu-
26 lation and allied nations, including natural gas, petroleum

1 (including crude oil and petroleum products), and critical
2 minerals.

3 (d) AUTHORITY TO ENTER INTO AGREEMENTS.—In
4 carrying out the program, the Secretaries may enter into
5 1 or more agreements directly with a third party under
6 such terms and conditions as the Secretaries determine
7 appropriate.

8 (e) REPORTS.—Not later than 1 year after the date
9 of enactment of this Act, the Secretaries shall submit a
10 one-time report to the Committee on Energy and Natural
11 Resources and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the
12 Senate and the Committee on Energy and Commerce, the
13 Committee on Natural Resources, and the Committee on
14 Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives that in-
15 cludes the following:

16 (1) An assessment of the approximate quantity
17 of undiscovered resources in each offshore regional
18 planning area as defined by the 2024–2029 National
19 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Pro-
20 posed Final Program of September 29, 2023. In car-
21 rying out such assessment, the Secretaries shall—

22 (A) prioritize the acquisition and use of
23 advanced geophysical and geotechnical data and
24 methods;

1 (B) acquire and apply new and emerging
2 modeling and analytic technologies, including
3 data analysis tools, quantum computing, mod-
4 eling, and geographic information systems, to
5 approximate the quantity and establish a peer-
6 reviewed range of undiscovered resources in
7 each regional planning area with a discussion of
8 the upper and lower bound of the estimates
9 with that discussion to include recommenda-
10 tions as to how to reduce the range of uncer-
11 tainty; and

12 (C) utilize any existing maritime vessels or
13 deployed capability, including any geoseismic,
14 sonar, or related mapping technologies.

15 (2) An assessment of how the unavailability for
16 leasing of any lands that are withdrawn under sec-
17 tion 12 of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act
18 (43 U.S.C. 1341) or part of the National Marine
19 Sanctuary System established by section 301(c) of
20 the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (16 U.S.C.
21 1431(c)) affects—

22 (A) the exploration, development, and pro-
23 duction of oil and gas;

24 (B) national security, including the Na-
25 tion's ability to supply the Armed Forces, its al-

1 lies, and trade partners with petroleum prod-
2 ucts and related fuels;

3 (C) domestic jobs and employment;

4 (D) the amount of revenue States and
5 coastal political subdivisions receive pursuant to
6 section 105 of the Gulf of Mexico Energy Secu-
7 rity Act of 2006 (43 U.S.C. 1331 note); and

8 (E) the ability of the Secretary of Energy
9 to acquire and exchange petroleum products for
10 storage in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

11 (3) An assessment of undiscovered subsea re-
12 sources, materials, and anomalies that could be uti-
13 lized by commercial or in national security oper-
14 ations, including stone, sand, gravel, marine min-
15 erals, or offshore critical minerals.

16 (f) STANDARDIZATION OF EXISTING REPORTS.—Sec-
17 tion 357 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C.
18 15912) is amended—

19 (1) in subsection (a)(1), by striking “of Mexico
20 and Canada”;

21 (2) by redesignating subsection (b) as sub-
22 section (c);

23 (3) by inserting after subsection (a) the fol-
24 lowing:

1 “(b) INCLUSIONS.—The inventory and analysis con-
2 ducted under subsection (a) shall include the following:

3 “(1) An assessment of the approximate quan-
4 tity of undiscovered resources in each regional plan-
5 ning area as defined by the 2024–2029 National
6 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Pro-
7 posed Final Program of September 29, 2023, which
8 shall include the following:

9 “(A) A detailed analysis of how the future
10 production of these undiscovered resources
11 could influence the United States capacity to
12 competitively produce, market, and export hy-
13 drocarbons on a global scale. This assessment
14 should consider key market variables such as
15 global supply and demand dynamics, projected
16 price points, geopolitical factors, and the role of
17 United States production in maintaining global
18 energy security.

19 “(B) An economic analysis of how the de-
20 velopment and production of these undiscovered
21 resources would affect domestic employment
22 across the supply chain. This should include di-
23 rect, indirect, and induced job impacts, empha-
24 sizing the potential for job creation in explo-

1 ration, production, refining, logistics, and asso-
2 ciated industries.

3 “(C) To the fullest extent practicable, a
4 comparative analysis of offshore oil and gas ex-
5 ploration and development practices for each
6 major offshore producing country shall be con-
7 ducted within 10 years of the passage of the
8 CORE Act and once every 10 years thereafter.
9 This analysis shall provide the following:

10 “(i) Data on the number of offshore
11 acres offered for lease, including the fre-
12 quency of lease auctions, sales, or lease
13 issuances. This should encompass lease
14 structures, fiscal terms, and competitive
15 positioning relative to United States leas-
16 ing practices.

17 “(ii) Detailed reporting on the volume
18 of oil produced, measured in barrels on an
19 annual basis, including historical trends,
20 production forecasts, and the influence of
21 technological advancements on production
22 efficiency and recovery rates.

23 “(iii) Detailed reporting on the vol-
24 ume of gas produced, measured in cubic
25 feet, accounting for regional market de-

mands, export capabilities, and contributions to energy diversification strategies.

“(iv) An assessment of both undiscovered and discovered offshore oil and gas resources, including probabilistic estimates of resource volumes that consider geological, technological, and market factors impacting exploration success and resource recoverability.

“(2) An identification and assessment of how the unavailability for leasing of any lands that are withdrawn under section 12 of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1341) or part of the National Marine Sanctuary System established by section 301(c) of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (16 U.S.C. 1431(c)) affects—

“(A) the exploration, development, and production of oil and gas;

“(B) national security, including the Nation’s ability to supply the Armed Forces, its allies, and trade partners with petroleum products and related fuels;

“(C) domestic jobs and employment;

“(D) the amount of revenue States and coastal political subdivisions receive pursuant to

1 section 105 of the Gulf of Mexico Energy Secu-
2 rity Act of 2006 (43 U.S.C. 1331 note); and

3 “(E) the ability of the Secretary of Energy
4 to acquire and exchange petroleum products for
5 storage in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.”;

6 (3) in subsection (c), as so redesignated—

7 (A) by striking “The Secretary shall sub-
8 mit” and inserting “Not later than 365 days
9 after the date of enactment of the CORE Act,
10 the Secretary shall submit”; and

11 (B) by striking “, within 6 months of the
12 date of enactment of the section”; and

13 (4) by adding at the end the following:

14 “(d) UPDATING ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY.—

15 “(1) ASSESSMENT.—The Secretary of the Inte-
16 rior shall periodically conduct an assessment of the
17 costs, benefits, and accuracy of the models utilized
18 by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to con-
19 duct resource assessments. In carrying out such as-
20 sessment, the Secretary of the Interior shall jointly
21 consult with Society of Petroleum Engineers’ Re-
22 sources and Reserves Committee, the National Pe-
23 troleum Council, and also the United States Associa-
24 tion for Energy Economics, with respect to recom-
25 mending new methodologies, if deficiencies these

1 groups identified exist in current practices or if po-
2 tential benefits could be realized from employing new
3 methods of analysis. The initial assessment shall be
4 conducted not later than 1 year after the date of en-
5 actment of the CORE Act, and subsequent assess-
6 ments not later than every 10 years thereafter. The
7 National Petroleum Council shall lead joint consulta-
8 tions with the Secretary of the Interior.

9 “(2) REPORT.—Following each assessment con-
10 ducted under paragraph (1), the Secretary of the In-
11 terior shall update the assessment methodologies
12 used in the comprehensive inventory of U.S. Outer
13 Continental Shelf Oil and Natural Gas Resources.
14 The Secretary shall also prepare a report, based on
15 the timelines in paragraph (1), which shall include
16 the following:

17 “(A) A clear, detailed explanation of any
18 updates made to the assessment methodologies
19 based on the joint consultations with the Soci-
20 ety of Petroleum Engineers’ Resources and Re-
21 serves Committee, the National Petroleum
22 Council, and the United States Association for
23 Energy Economics.

1 “(B) An evaluation describing how the up-
2 dates improve the accuracy, cost-effectiveness,
3 and reliability of the resource assessments.

4 “(C) If any recommended updates are not
5 incorporated, the report must provide a detailed
6 explanation of why these updates were not
7 adopted, including any technical, legal, or prac-
8 tical constraints that prevented their implemen-
9 tation.”.

10 **SEC. 3. OFFSHORE GEOLOGICAL AND GEOPHYSICAL SUR-**
11 **VEY LICENSING.**

12 (a) INCIDENTAL TAKE REGULATIONS.—Notwith-
13 standing any other provision of law, the National Marine
14 Fisheries Service and the National Oceanic and Atmos-
15 pheric Administration shall maintain incidental take regu-
16 lations under the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972
17 (16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.) governing the issuance of Letters
18 of Authorization for Outer Continental Shelf geophysical
19 and geological surveys. These regulations shall not expire,
20 nor require renewal every 5 years, but be maintained and
21 updated as necessary through the requirements of sub-
22 chapter II of chapter 5 and chapter 7 of title 5, United
23 States Code (commonly known as the “Administrative
24 Procedure Act”). The regulations governing Outer Conti-
25 nental Shelf geophysical and geological surveys referenced

1 in this subsection (section 217 of title 50, Code of Federal
2 Regulations), issued by the National Marine Fisheries
3 Service effective on May 24, 2024, shall not expire on
4 April 19, 2026.

5 (b) GEOLOGICAL AND GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY LI-
6 CENSING.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Inte-
8 rior shall authorize geological and geophysical sur-
9 veys related to oil and gas activities on the Gulf of
10 Mexico Outer Continental Shelf within 30 days of
11 receipt of a completed application and shall, as ap-
12 plicable to survey type, comply with the mitigation
13 and monitoring measures in subsections (a), (b), (c),
14 (d), (f), and (g) of section 217.184 of title 50, Code
15 of Federal Regulations (as in effect on January 1,
16 2022), and section 217.185 of title 50, Code of Fed-
17 eral Regulations (as in effect on January 1, 2022).
18 In issuing permits for these surveys, the Secretary
19 shall not require an applicant to obtain a letter of
20 authorization. Any permit authorizing a geological or
21 geophysical survey shall be extended for a period of
22 no more than 12 months within 30 days of receipt
23 of a written request from the permittee.

24 (2) COMPLIANCE WITH OTHER ACTS.—Geologi-
25 cal and geophysical surveys authorized pursuant to

1 this subsection are deemed to be in full compliance
2 with the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972
3 (16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.) and the Endangered Spe-
4 cies Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), and im-
5 plementing regulations.

6 (c) JUDICIAL REVIEW AND ENFORCEMENT.—

7 (1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

8 (A) AGENCY DOCUMENT.—The term
9 “agency document” means, with respect to a
10 geophysical or geoseismic survey project, a
11 record of decision, categorical exclusion, envi-
12 ronmental document, or programmatic environ-
13 mental document.

14 (B) NEPA TERMS.—The terms “categor-
15 ical exclusion”, “environmental document”, and
16 “programmatic environmental document” have
17 the meanings given such terms, respectively, in
18 section 111 of the National Environmental Pol-
19 icy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4336e).

20 (2) IN GENERAL.—A court shall not enjoin an
21 offshore oil and gas geophysical or geoseismic survey
22 project if the court determines that the plaintiff is
23 unable to demonstrate that the claim of the plaintiff
24 is likely to succeed on the merits.

1 (3) CONSIDERATIONS IN INJUNCTIVE RELIEF.—

2 While considering any request for an injunction that
3 applies to any agency action as part of an offshore
4 oil and gas geophysical or geoseismic survey project,
5 the court reviewing the agency action shall only con-
6 sider deficiencies by an agency pursuant to law. The
7 court may remand the geophysical or geoseismic sur-
8 vey project to the applicable agency with instruction
9 to correct (including specific directions) the errors or
10 deficiencies within 30 days. An activity under the
11 geophysical or geoseismic survey project may be car-
12 ried out so long as such activity does not affect the
13 errors or deficiencies described in this paragraph.

14 (4) REVIEW.—Unless the court finds that the
15 applicable agency entirely failed to publish a re-
16 quired environmental assessment or environmental
17 impact statement, on remand—

18 (A) the court shall not require such agency
19 to prepare a new environmental assessment or
20 environmental impact statement; and

21 (B) such agency may use another format,
22 including a memorandum or errata sheet, to
23 document any new analysis required.

24 (5) LIMITATIONS ON CLAIMS.—Notwithstanding
25 any other provision of law, a claim arising under

1 Federal law seeking judicial review of a geophysical
2 or geoseismic survey project shall be barred unless—

3 (A) with respect to an agency document
4 noticed in the Federal Register, such claim is
5 filed not later than 120 days after the date of
6 publication of a notice in the Federal Register
7 of agency intent to carry out the geophysical or
8 geoseismic survey project, unless a shorter pe-
9 riod is specified in such Federal law;

10 (B) in the case of an agency document not
11 described in paragraph (3), such claim is filed
12 not later than 120 days after the date that is
13 the earlier of—

14 (i) the date on which such agency doc-
15 ument is published; and

16 (ii) the date on which such agency
17 document is noticed; and

18 (C) in the case of an authorization or ac-
19 tion for which there was a public comment pe-
20 riod, such claim—

21 (i) is filed by a party that—

22 (I) participated in the adminis-
23 trative proceedings regarding such
24 geophysical or geoseismic survey
25 project; and

1 (II) submitted a comment during
2 such public comment period and such
3 comment was sufficiently detailed to
4 put the applicable agency on notice of
5 the issue upon which the party seeks
6 judicial review; and

7 (ii) is related to such comment.

8 (6) DISTRICT COURT REVIEW.—A district court
9 shall have no more than 30 days from the date a pe-
10 tition is filed to issue a decision under this section.

11 (7) APPEALS COURT REVIEW.—An appeals
12 court shall have no more than 30 days to issue a de-
13 cision on an appeal of a district court’s ruling under
14 this section.

15 (d) REPORTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY.—The Sec-
16 retary concerned shall publish online public reports
17 monthly detailing the number of permit applications re-
18 ceived, the average processing time of such applications,
19 and instances of noncompliance beginning 1 calendar year
20 after the date of the enactment of this Act.

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