

STATEMENT BY THE HONORABLE DON YOUNG
Ranking Republican Member
Committee on Natural Resources
on H.R. 6515, DRILL Act

17 June 2008

Mr./Madam Speaker,

Today is yet another sad day for the American people - real people who are suffering from \$4-plus pain at the pump and the Democrat Majority's refusal to do anything about it.

This bill is nothing more than a feeble attempt to fool the American people into believing that the Democratic leadership in Congress actually supports more drilling. They don't. The Democrats in Congress have a well documented, 30 year history of opposing more drilling. In fact, just last year, the very same Democrat leaders in this body who now say they support more drilling were arguing that oil companies were drilling too much and too quickly.

And let me remind Members that in the first 100 hours of the Democrat's Majority's "new direction" for American energy, they attempted to limit and slow down energy production in the National Petroleum Reserve—Alaska (NPR-A) by undoing the provisions Republicans enacted into law in 2005 that would have expedited more drilling in NPR-A.

This bill is a sham. It will not produce one drop of American-made oil or natural gas. In fact, there is more drilling in my dentist's office than in this bill.

For the record, here are the FACTS about drilling in NPR-A:

- ALL lands in NPRA that are available to be leased under current Bureau of Land Management planning documents have been offered for lease in the past, are currently leased, or are available to be leased now.

- If the Democrats want to open all of NPR-A for production, they'll have to exempt the 24 million-acre area from the National Environmental Policy Act and dozen other environmental laws. And if they wanted to produce more oil, they'd do something to address the multiple environmental lawsuits that have slowed/stopped production in NPRA.
- Both industry and the Department of the Interior say the Bureau of Land Management has enough authority to do lease sales and the agency can do them every year if they want – **the Democrats' bill won't do anything new.**
- Both industry and Interior say the only impediment to more production is environmental lawsuits, and this bill doesn't touch that. In fact, the "use it or lose it" parts of the bill create new litigation that will hold up leasing in NPRA.

This legislation is yet another unfortunate example of the Democrat leadership's negligence on producing energy. For the last 30 years they have thrown every obstacle they could in the way of producing more oil and gas for consumers.

It's interesting, however, that the Democrat Leadership is arguing that oil companies must ravage the 24 million-acre NPR-A – an area 20% larger than ANWR -- for its 10.6 billion barrels of oil.

Are we to “extrapolate” that the Speaker and the Majority Leader now support allowing Americans to tap the same amount of oil from just 2000 acres of the 19 million-acre Coastal Plain of ANWR?

The Coastal Plain of ANWR, a flat, frozen desert just 74 miles east of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, is just 1.5 million acres – 1/16th the size of NPRA. It contains the same amount of oil. And with today's technology we can produce all of that oil while disturbing no more than 2000 acres, or 0.01 of ANWR's 19 million acres.

If the Majority leadership sincerely wants more oil, surely they would support drilling in ANWR, the environmentally friendly alternative to NPR-A. But no, they don't. And this FACT should serve as a reminder of the Majority's REAL energy policy: NO MORE DRILLING.

I urge my colleagues to vote NO on this do-nothing legislation.