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Dissenting Views
H.R. 6082: Congressional Replacement of President Obama's Energy-Restricting and Job-Limiting Offshore Drilling Plan

With the passage of H.R. 6082, over the last 18 months the Natural Resources Committee has now reported out a total of 11 bills intended to open up nearly every last piece of our public lands to drilling and hand even more giveaways to Big Oil. All in all, the Majority has cast a total of 62 votes in the Natural Resources Committee that benefit the oil and gas industry.

The Majority has voted repeatedly to allow drilling off our beaches in California, New Jersey and Florida without improving the safety of offshore drilling. They have voted to allow drilling in the crown jewel of our wildlife refuge system, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. They have voted to turn over nearly all of our public lands onshore to the oil industry within a few short years. They have repeatedly voted against putting in place any new safety standards for offshore drilling following the BP spill, against ensuring that oil companies making record profits are paying their fair share to drill on public lands, and against keeping the oil and gas produced from public lands here in America to benefit American consumers.

We oppose H.R. 6082 because it continues that trend, forcing drilling off the East Coast, stretching from Maine to South Carolina, off of Southern California and in the important fishery of Bristol Bay off Alaska while preventing proper environmental review. This legislation would also dangerously rush additional leasing offshore in the Arctic.

H.R. 6082 would revive a number of long-dead lease sales proposed by the Bush Administration just 4 days before leaving office. In the same week that the House will consider Republican legislation to prohibit "midnight" regulations, we will also consider a Republican bill to legislatively reinstate the Bush Administration "midnight" offshore leasing plan.

And the legislation would prevent proper environmental review of offshore drilling in the Atlantic, Pacific and Bristol Bay by requiring that the Department conduct a single Multisale

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for these areas. Such EIS documents are usually done for lease sales in areas like the Gulf of Mexico, where the conditions are well known and similar. However, under this proposal, the Department would be forced to conduct a single environmental review for these three distinct and wildly different areas. In fact, it would be almost difficult to imagine three more different environments.

Ultimately, H.R. 6082 ignores the fact that President Obama's offshore drilling plan already makes more than 75 percent of the offshore oil and gas resources available for drilling. It ignores the fact that domestic oil production is at an 18 year high. It ignores the fact that we have fifty percent more floating drilling rigs operating in the Gulf of Mexico than we did prior to the BP spill and have more total rigs operating in the United States than does the rest of the world combined. And the bill fails to address safety reforms for offshore drilling nor does it ensure that oil companies are paying their fair share to drill on public lands.

The Majority rejected an amendment from Representative Tonko (D-NY) that would have required oil companies seeking new leases on public land to disclose to the public secret campaign contributions over the preceding five years. The Majority rejected an amendment from Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee Ranking Member Holt (D-NJ) that would have improved the safety of offshore drilling, ended the roughly \$1 billion in free drilling by oil companies in the Gulf of Mexico each year, required oil companies to begin drilling on the 26 million acres they already have under lease offshore that hold nearly 18 billion barrels of oil, and struck provisions in the underlying bill limiting environmental review of drilling in new areas.

The Majority also rejected an amendment from Representative Holt that would have required oil companies to test all drilling, safety and oil spill response equipment in actual Arctic conditions prior to drilling there and ensured that drilling in Bristol Bay would not harm fishing industry jobs or the economy in Alaska and the West Coast. An amendment from Full Committee Ranking Member Markey (D-MA) to ensure that all natural gas produced from public lands under this act stayed in America to help American consumers and our economy was rebuffed by the Majority. The Majority also defeated an amendment from Representative Markey that would have required major, integrated oil companies, which are making record profits, to relinquish some of the roughly \$4 billion the industry receives every year in taxpayer subsidies. Finally, the Majority rejected an amendment from Representative Pallone (D-NJ) that would have protected New Jersey and the other East Coast states by striking the lease sales in the Atlantic.

Democrats will continue to support President Obama's "All of the Above" energy strategy, which has successfully reduced our dependence on foreign oil from 57 percent during the last year of the Bush Administration to 45 percent today and oppose the Majority's continued efforts to hand new giveaways to Big Oil.

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