



Search the Website

Search



Enlarge A A A HOME

About Geoff | Kentucky's 4th District | Constituent Services | Issues | News | Multimedia | Photo Gallery | Student Corner | Links | Contact Geoff

Email Newsletter

News

Sign-Up

Special Features



CONTACT US



NEED HELP?



SEND A MESSAGE OF SUPPORT TO OUR TROOPS!

The Truth about the Outer Continental Shelf

By Congressman Geoff Davis

Gas prices broke another record last week when the national average for a gallon of regular unleaded reached \$4.08. Kentuckians throughout the Commonwealth are scrambling to rearrange their budgets in order to cope with soaring fuel and grocery costs. Meanwhile, the Democratic Majority in Washington, D.C. refuses to recognize the need to develop and increase our domestic energy supply in order to reduce our crippling dependency on foreign oil.

The Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) contains valuable energy resources that could greatly expand American oil and gasoline production. Unfortunately, much debate and confusion surrounds the OCS and its ability to impact our domestic energy supply. It is important to separate the facts from the fiction as Congress begins working toward a new energy strategy for our future.

The OCS is comprised of the submerged lands, subsoil and seabed that extend approximately 230 miles offshore from U.S. coasts. According to estimates from the U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service, the OCS could have a total of 86 billion barrels of oil and 420 trillion cubic feet of natural gas available for extraction. That would be enough oil to satisfy U.S. demand, at current consumption levels, for more than a decade.

Since 1981, the U.S. has observed the Outer Continental Shelf moratorium, which bans exploration for offshore natural gas and oil deposits in nearly 90% of the OCS. The ban was originally enacted in response to environmentalists' fears of oil spills close to U.S. shores. The ban has not been modernized to take into account the numerous technological advances that have made it possible to conduct oil exploration in the OCS that is out of sight of the coast, protects coral reefs and habitats, and protects against oil spills.

In 1977, the U.S. and Cuba signed a treaty that evenly divided the Florida Straits to preserve each country's economic rights. The agreement also divided access to the vast underwater oil and gas fields on both sides of the line. The Cuban government has begun negotiating leases with several countries, including Venezuela, Vietnam, Canada and Spain, to extract resources from Cuba's offshore territory. The U.S. Geological Survey estimates that these countries may be able to extract up to 4.6 billion barrels of oil from Cuban waters less than ninety miles from Florida's Key West. That's enough oil to match current U.S. oil imports from Saudi Arabia for eight years. America could be pulling eighteen times that amount of oil from our waters, yet we continue to leave this vital resource untapped.

As gas prices continue to break records, more people are recognizing the importance of using American resources to decrease our dependence on foreign oil. Nearly 65% of all voters support drilling for oil in U.S. coastal waters. By failing to lift this outdated and counterproductive moratorium, Democrat leaders in Congress have proven that they are out of touch with the American people. If Congress is serious about addressing high energy costs, we must remove restrictions on the vital energy reserves that exist in our waters and set America on the path toward energy independence.



Print This Page

Related Information

No related information found.

No related links are available

[<< Back](#)

[About Geoff](#) | [Kentucky's 4th District](#) | [Constituent Services](#) | [Issues](#) | [News](#) | [Multimedia](#) | [Photo Gallery](#) | [Student Corner](#)
[Links](#) | [Contact Geoff](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)
1108 Longworth House Office Building | Washington, DC 20515 | p: 202-225-3465 | f: 202-225-0003