

states an opportunity to determine what occurs along their shores.

I represent a coastal California district that includes beautiful beaches up and down the City of San Clemente's shoreline. I take the responsibility to protect those beautiful beaches seriously and I have worked with local officials over the years to do just that. I would not be supporting the bill if I did not believe it gave local and state officials the necessary authorities they need to protect our invaluable coastlines. Our coastal states deserve the right to make energy production decisions that affect their people, environment, and economy.

I also believe we must ensure that our military needs throughout the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) are accounted for and protected. Our military conducts significant training and operations in the OCS to protect our mainland and maintain readiness for future conflicts. As many of my colleagues from the Armed Services Committee know, military training and operations are under a seemingly constant threat of encroachment from many sources.

In fact, just this week a lawsuit was filed by an environmental group to prevent the Navy from conducting exercises in the Pacific Ocean. While people will undoubtedly disagree about the merits of the lawsuit, there should be no disagreement about the fact that the cumulative effect of encroachments upon our military restricts the ability of our servicemembers to protect our nation.

To that end, I believe we must enact OCS drilling policies that do not place another level of work-around restrictions on our military and require OCS leasing programs be developed with the consultation and concurrence of the Secretary of Defense. We did so in the Energy Policy Act as it relates to siting LNG facilities and we should do it again in the Deep Ocean Energy Resources Act as we develop OCS energy supply. I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Armed Services Committee and Resources Committee to ensure that any OCS drilling legislation sent to the President provides the proper and necessary authorities to protect our military ranges, training and operations.

With the July Fourth holiday just around the corner, Americans are reminded of the liberties and freedoms secured by our nation's military. There are many ways Americans can express their appreciation for our military. One way this Congress can express our appreciation is to enact policies that protect our military from unintended encroachments to military training, operations, and readiness.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 4761, the Deep Ocean Energy Resources Act, which would end a twenty-five year oil and natural gas drilling prohibition for most of the country's offshore waters.

The increased strain that high-energy prices are having on the pockets of many Americans, and the national security concerns over the United States' dependence on foreign oil are real problems that deserve thoughtful, multi-pronged policy solutions. While the severity of current energy trends cannot be ignored, we cannot rush to drill before first crafting a comprehensive energy policy with solutions for meeting both our immediate and future energy needs. We must work to increase vehicle fuel efficiency, spur investment in efficiency and renewable energy research and technology, and improve conservation methods.

I respect the attempt to increase the states' ability to participate in the planning of oil and gas development off their shores, however H.R. 4671 goes too far and undermines the strong federal protections for our coastal waters. H.R. 4671 purports to allow states to maintain control of activities in their coastal waters, but instead ties states' hands in many ways with unprecedented provisions. It subordinates every other use of coastal waters to oil drilling, blocking any effort to use waters in a way that could ever limit drilling, undermines states' authority under the Coastal Zone Management Act, changes state marine boundary maps, and it eliminates many environmental reviews and public participation requirements for issuing oil leases and for exploration and drilling activities. Clearly, this is of concern to our State and other nearby States too (see attached Governor's letter).

I am also concerned that this legislation lifts the offshore drilling ban, while we continue to ignore many conservation and alternative fuel proposals, which would have a more immediate and beneficial effect on meeting our energy needs.

H.R. 4761 does not simply deal with increased drilling, but instead has other far-reaching implications for coastal states and federal revenues. This legislation would create an open-ended fund for drilling states, with no reporting requirements, at a time when we have a huge federal deficit. The estimated cost of this transfer from federal revenues to states is estimated to be several hundred billion dollars over 60 years, according to President Bush's Statement of Administration Policy.

While a thoughtful approach to offshore drilling is worthy of consideration, this legislation is not good policy for Delaware or the United States.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in opposition to the Deep Ocean Energy Resources Act (H.R. 4761). I fundamentally disagree with the premise of the Deep Ocean Energy Resources Act that more drilling, regardless of where it is, is the answer to energy independence.

I have read in the papers this week that this bill will be considered on the House floor as part of an "Energy week." Republicans would like to use this bill to claim that Democrats are not committed to ending our dependence on foreign oil or as a ruse to feign lowering gas prices before the July 4th holiday weekend. This is simply not true.

Just so we have the facts straight, today we are considering a bill that will immediately lift a twenty-five year moratorium on offshore drilling on the Outer Continental Shelf. This is the same twenty-five year moratorium that the House overwhelmingly voted in favor of continuing just a couple of weeks ago when we considered the Fiscal Year 2007 Interior Appropriations. The major difference between the two votes is that the Deep Ocean Energy Resources Act will give states an "opt out" option.

The so-called "opt out" option is alarming to me, because in truth, it is anything but giving states the authority to control what happens off their own coasts. In fact, what this bill does is first cut the moratoria area by 100 miles from state boundaries (current law establishes a boundary of 200 miles). Then the bill lifts the moratoria on drilling between 50–100 miles off a state boundary. Yes, many of my colleagues

will assert that states then have the ability to "opt out" of offshore drilling leases. However, the complicated procedures outlined in the bill will actually make it difficult for states to use this "opt out" option and if they miss the deadline to file a petition, drilling can start immediately. My question for my colleagues who support this bill is: What happens if New Jersey is successful in opting out of new leasing but New York and Delaware decide to allow drilling. How can New Jersey coastal cities, businesses, and other interested parties be sure that accidents in neighboring states will not affect their industries?

Many of my colleagues today have talked at length about the costs of this bill. An estimate initially done by the Minerals Management Service (MMS) concluded that the bill would add \$69 billion to the federal budget deficit over the next fifteen years. CBO also estimates that the bill will cost taxpayers \$11 billion over the next ten years. I would hope that many of my colleagues who care deeply about the fiscal discipline of this Congress would see the hypocrisy in passing this bill.

I am most concerned with the bill's direct contravention of the National Environmental Policy Act provisions that promote environmentally friendly practices. Section 12 of this bill says that seismic air gun surveys and other exploratory leasing plans are exempt from preparing an Environmental Impact Statement before drilling can occur. The effects on our environment of seismic air gun surveys and other exploratory plans are well documented. Large blasts and seismic airgun arrays can cause severe damage to the hearing of many of the ocean wildlife that depend on hearing for survival in addition to the damage to the reefs and other ocean landscape. In 2004, the International Whaling Commission's Scientific Committee concluded that increased sound from seismic surveys was "cause for serious concern." Allowing lease sales to be exempt from NEPA is misguided policy.

For all these reasons I have outlined above, I urge my colleagues to vote against the Deep Ocean Energy Resources Act. I have said this before on the House floor and I believe it is worth saying again: drilling is not the answer to our energy concerns and until we in Congress work to promote energy conservation and sustainable energy supplies, we will continue on the same treacherous path we are on today.

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Chairman, I rise again today in strong support of jobs and lower energy costs for the American people. The House is considering the Deep Ocean Energy Resources Act of 2006 that would establish a common-sense framework to help America access more of its vast energy resources in an environmentally safe manner. More access to energy sources means more energy security for the American people, more jobs for workers and less dependency on foreign sources of energy.

I strongly support H.R. 4761 and commend Representative BOBBY JINDAL for his work on this important energy bill. I also want to thank Chairman POMBO and Chairman BARTON for their work on this issue and for their leadership in helping bring this bill to the floor today.

The Deep Ocean Energy Resources Act will allow for expanded oil and gas leasing off the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) by allowing the Secretary of the Interior to offer new OCS areas for leasing that presently are not open.