

This is the latest in a series of bipartisan efforts which passed the Congress in some cases unanimously, in other cases almost unanimously at the very end of the session before the August recess began. They represented a dramatic departure from what happened in 1995 and the first half of 1996. We have welfare reform, health care reform, a higher minimum wage, better retirement provisions and other incentives for people who are running small businesses in America, safer food and drinking water as a result of these initiatives.

And I hope that this is an omen of things to come, because this is the way America moves forward. When we tone our rhetoric down and work together and roll up our sleeves and try to meet our legitimate interests and protect our values, come to grips with these challenges, we can do it. And I am very, very pleased by what happened in the last few days of Congress. And as I said, I think the American people are, and I hope we can see more of it.

Let me tell you a little about this act, which passed with unanimous bipartisan support in both Houses of Congress. By simplifying the way that royalties are collected and clarifying existing laws, this law will speed the collection of millions of dollars in Federal and State revenues which the Government is due, create many new jobs for America's workers, and most important of all, will help to reduce our own Nation's reliance on foreign oil and gas.

Our economy, our environment, our national security depend upon a healthy domestic oil and gas industry. Many Americans don't know it, but a significant percentage of the oil and nat-

ural gas produced in the United States comes from Federal lands. Taxpayers earn about \$4 billion a year from these sales. Tens of thousands of Americans work in energy production jobs on Federal lands. Until today, regulatory redtape and conflicting court rulings had discouraged many companies from taking full advantage of these resources.

I have been trying to change this since I took office. Our administration has worked with the Congress, with Governors, State legislators, and others to stimulate domestic energy production while protecting our environment. Recently, I lifted the 23-year ban against Alaskan oil exports and actively supported efforts to increase production in the Gulf of Mexico. About a year ago this month, I made a commitment to many of the people who are here with me today to win the passage of the bill I'm about to sign.

Today we're helping to protect our energy future as we go forward into the 21st century stronger than ever. Yesterday we showed that we can do these things in a way that protects our natural environment for future generations. Again I will say, when we work together there is nothing that can stop America. We are celebrating that working together now, and I hope we will have more of it. We have plenty of challenges ahead, but the best times for this country will be the 21st century if we do what we should do and if we do it together.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:35 a.m. at the Teton Science School. H.R. 1975, approved August 13, was assigned Public Law No. 104-185.

Statement on Signing the Federal Oil and Gas Royalty Simplification and Fairness Act of 1996

August 13, 1996

I have today signed into law H.R. 1975, the "Federal Oil and Gas Royalty Simplification and Fairness Act of 1996." This legislation will provide new tools to further improve and streamline the Federal royalty program.

My Administration has worked cooperatively with the Congress, governors, and industry to develop legislation that would achieve certainty, equity, and simplicity in the royalty management

program. These are the same goals we are striving for in our efforts to reinvent Government.

This legislation establishes certainty with a 7-year statute of limitations for all royalty collections. It establishes equity by requiring payment of interest to companies on overpayments to the Government and by allowing the refund of overpayments to all Federal leaseholders. Fi-

nally, it encourages simplicity in the royalty management program.

My Administration fully supports finding new ways for the States to work cooperatively and creatively with the Federal Government to provide superior service to the citizens of the United States. I believe we can help achieve that goal with this legislation, which expands the list of royalty-program activities that may be delegated to States, and provides certainty with respect to expeditious Federal action when States seek additional authority to help administer the program.

In signing H.R. 1975, I do so with the understanding that the congressional leadership has

pledged to pass subsequent legislation making necessary technical corrections.

I am grateful for the bipartisan effort of the Congress in working with my Administration to develop this legislation. I believe this is an example of what we can do working together for the benefit of the American public, the States, and the energy industry.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
August 13, 1996.

NOTE: H.R. 1975, approved August 13, was assigned Public Law No. 104-185.

Exchange With Reporters in Jackson Hole

August 14, 1996

"Between Hope and History: Meeting America's Challenges for the 21st Century"

[*The President's remarks are joined in progress.*]

The President. —basically my philosophy about where I think America is and where I think we ought to go.

Q. Would you describe it as a manifesto for the next administration if you get reelected?

The President. Well, it's not an exclusive list of all the things I intend to do, but it makes the argument about why I think the direction we're going is right, why we're better off than we were, and what I hope we'll do. And it's just something I've been wanting to say. I finished it the first 2 days we got here, and I hope the people who read it will find it helpful. I was glad to do it.

It's beautiful, isn't it?

Q. Have you been getting enough relaxation? Are you feeling rested, sir?

The President. More rested now. The first 2 days I worked real hard trying to finish the book, and, you know, a lot of things happened the last 2 months which kind of got me behind deadlines. So I worked pretty hard on that. But yesterday I got to play a little golf, and of course, we had that wonderful hike the day before.

Q. When did you decide to write the book, sir?

The President. About a year ago.

Q. Guys, move to the right, move a step to the right.

The President. Yes, I don't want anybody to get hurt here.

Q. Is Senator Dole in the book, sir?

The President. It's basically a book about the country.

Republican Convention

Q. Do you care to comment at all about the choice of Jack Kemp for the Republican Vice Presidential nomination?

The President. No, I'm going to leave them alone, let them have their convention. I like Al Gore; that's my comment. [*Laughter*] The best Vice President in history.

Democratic Convention

Q. What can you say about the train ride you're going to take to the convention, sir?

The President. I'm excited about it. We're trying to—I think they probably finalized all the routes now, and I love trains, so I'm excited about it. I didn't know—the main thing I was concerned about is if we did it I just didn't want to inconvenience people because of the security and everything. And I think we've got it—I've got a route now where, apparently, there will be a minimum of dislocation.

President's Vacation

Q. You love trains, but do you love horses?