

Public Law 99-118
99th Congress

Joint Resolution

Oct. 7, 1985

[S.J. Res. 115]

To designate 1985 as the "Oil Heat Centennial Year".

Whereas, on August 11, 1885, the United States Patent Office granted a patent to David H. Burrell of Little Falls, New York, for a furnace that could burn liquid and gaseous fuels, which patent is generally regarded by technical experts and industrial historians as the first technically sound oil burner;

Whereas at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 oil burners, for the first time, were utilized in major public exhibit buildings, and these oil burners were hailed and recognized as a technological combustion breakthrough by most, but were condemned as "instruments of Satan that brought the fires of hell to Earth" by some;

Whereas, by World War I, the oil burner had become the premier naval source of propulsion; its technology was sought and adopted by Russia, Germany, Great Britain, France, and the United States to power large warships, especially superdreadnoughts and battle cruisers; and oil burning techniques and oilfield locations became a major source of naval espionage;

Whereas oil burner technology was adopted to the heating needs of homes, businesses, and industry in the decades that followed World War I, increasing from about twelve thousand installations in 1920 to two million in 1940 to about ten million in 1960 to more than fifteen million in the 1970's, helping to generate improved housing for all Americans and the industrial boom that powered post-World War II America;

Whereas the oil burner continues to be a major, modern heating technology used by millions of consumers in the States of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Utah, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, and the District of Columbia;

Whereas the oil heat industry is, and always has been, developed and characterized by a large and diverse group of competitive small businesses, many of which are family owned through a second, third, and fourth generation that began in their business endeavors by supplying ice, lumber, coal, and then oil, to their communities;

Whereas many of these small businesses are in the forefront of new energy efficient technologies of the 1980's, leading the way toward higher efficiency oil heat, new conservation techniques, solar heating, and other technologies; and

Whereas the one hundredth anniversary of the development of the oil burner is an appropriate time to recognize the overall contributions of oil heating to the technological revolution of the twentieth century and the individual contributions of the many thousands of small business men and women who made this century of heating comfort progress possible: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the year 1985 is designated as the "Oil Heat Centennial Year" thereby recognizing the contributions of the oil heat industry over the past century. The President is requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe this commemorative year, with appropriate Federal agencies to participate in the observance of such year and cooperate with persons and institutions conducting related observances, ceremonies, and activities.

Approved October 7, 1985.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S.J. Res. 115:

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 131 (1985):

July 8, considered and passed Senate.

Sept. 19, considered and passed House.