

105TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 180

Imposing certain restrictions and requirements on the leasing under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act of lands offshore Florida, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 7, 1997

Mr. GOSS introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Resources

A BILL

Imposing certain restrictions and requirements on the leasing under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act of lands offshore Florida, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

4 The Congress finds that—

5 (1) preleasing, leasing, exploration, and develop-
6 ment and production of oil and gas from the outer
7 Continental Shelf without adequate scientific and en-
8 vironmental information does not provide the level of

1 protection needed for the conservation of the natural
2 resources of the Nation's coastal areas;

3 (2) the Secretary of the Interior, assigned the
4 primary responsibility for the proper stewardship of
5 the Nation's public lands and outer Continental
6 Shelf, is required to provide adequate environmental
7 analysis under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands
8 Act (43 U.S.C. 1331 et seq.), the National Environ-
9 mental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.),
10 and other Federal laws, before such lands are leased
11 to develop oil and gas resources; and

12 (3) to protect the marine, coastal, and human
13 environments of coastal States, the citizens of such
14 States are entitled to have an adequate body of sci-
15 entific and environmental information, with a mini-
16 mal level of uncertainty, before such leasing and de-
17 velopment are carried out.

18 **SEC. 2. AREAS COVERED.**

19 The areas to which this Act applies are—

20 (1) that part of the Eastern Gulf of Mexico
21 Planning Area that is east of the lateral seaward
22 boundary between the States of Florida and Ala-
23 bama;

24 (2) the Straits of Florida Planning Area; and

1 (3) that part of the South Atlantic Planning
2 Area that is south of the lateral seaward boundary
3 between the States of Florida and Georgia.

4 **SEC. 3. RESTRICTIONS AND REQUIREMENTS.**

5 (a) GENERAL RULE.—The Secretary shall not con-
6 duct any preleasing activities, hold any lease sale, or ap-
7 prove or permit any exploration, production, or drilling ac-
8 tivities under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43
9 U.S.C. 1331 et seq.) in any area described in section 2
10 unless—

11 (1) all assessments, studies, and research re-
12 quired for such area under section 4 have been com-
13 pleted;

14 (2) all such assessments, studies, and research
15 have been peer reviewed, by qualified scientists not
16 employed by the Federal Government, as provided
17 for and supervised by the Joint Task Force; and

18 (3) the Secretary has transmitted to the Con-
19 gress and to the Governor of Florida a report, which
20 has been reviewed by the Joint Task Force, certify-
21 ing that the available physical oceanographic, eco-
22 logical, and socioeconomic information, and other en-
23 vironmental, endangered and threatened species, and
24 marine mammal information, is adequate to enable
25 the Secretary to carry out his responsibilities in such

1 area under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act
2 and other Federal laws, with a minimal level of un-
3 certainty, with respect to all preleasing activities,
4 leasing, and exploration, production, and drilling ac-
5 tivities.

6 (b) SPECIFIC PROHIBITION.—Notwithstanding sub-
7 section (a), the Secretary shall not conduct any preleasing
8 activity, hold any lease sale, or approve or permit any ex-
9 ploration, production, or drilling activities under the Outer
10 Continental Shelf Lands Act in that part of the Eastern
11 Gulf of Mexico Planning Area that is south of 26 degrees
12 north latitude and east of 86 degrees west longitude.

13 (c) ADDITIONAL PROHIBITION.—Notwithstanding
14 subsection (a), the Secretary shall not conduct any
15 preleasing activity or hold any lease sale in any area de-
16 scribed in section 2 until after the expiration of the period
17 covered by the next oil and gas leasing program issued
18 under section 18 of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands
19 Act (43 U.S.C. 1344) after the leasing program in effect
20 under such section as of the date of enactment of this Act.

21 **SEC. 4. ASSESSMENTS, STUDIES, AND RESEARCH.**

22 The assessments, studies, and research referred to in
23 section 3(a)(1) and (2) are as follows:

1 (1) EASTERN GULF OF MEXICO PLANNING
2 AREA.—With respect to the area described in section
3 2(1):

4 (A) The Assessment of the Historical, So-
5 cial, and Economic Impacts of Outer Continen-
6 tal Shelf Development on Gulf Coast Commu-
7 nities, to be conducted by the Minerals Manage-
8 ment Service.

9 (B) The Northeastern Gulf of Mexico Ma-
10 rine Ecosystem Study, to be conducted by the
11 National Biological Survey.

12 (C) Any additional physical oceanographic
13 studies identified and recommended by the
14 Northeast Gulf of Mexico Physical Oceanog-
15 raphy Workshop conducted by the Minerals
16 Management Service in conjunction with Flor-
17 ida State University.

18 (D) Any additional studies or research in
19 such area needed to acquire information where
20 one of the National Research Council's reports
21 found available information inadequate.

22 (E) Any additional physical oceanographic,
23 ecological, or socioeconomic or other environ-
24 mental studies or endangered and threatened
25 species and marine mammal surveys requested

1 by the Governor of Florida or the Joint Task
2 Force to minimize the uncertainty about the ef-
3 fects of all preleasing activities, leasing, and ex-
4 ploration, production, and drilling activities on
5 the marine environment, the coastal environ-
6 ment, and the human environment of the State
7 of Florida, including any such request for the
8 expansion of assessments, studies, or research
9 described in subparagraphs (A) through (D).

10 (2) STRAITS OF FLORIDA PLANNING AREA.—

11 With respect to the area described in section 2(2):

12 (A) The Assessment of the Historical, So-
13 cial, and Economic Impacts of Outer Continen-
14 tal Shelf Development on Gulf Coast Commu-
15 nities, to be conducted by the Minerals Manage-
16 ment Service.

17 (B) Any additional physical oceanographic,
18 ecological, or socioeconomic or other environ-
19 mental studies or endangered and threatened
20 species and marine mammal surveys requested
21 by the Governor of Florida or the Joint Task
22 Force to minimize the uncertainty about the ef-
23 fects of all preleasing activities, leasing, and ex-
24 ploration, production, and drilling activities on

1 the marine environment, the coastal environ-
2 ment, and the human environment of the State
3 of Florida.

4 (3) SOUTH ATLANTIC PLANNING AREA.—With
5 respect to the area described in section 2(3), any
6 physical oceanographic, ecological, or socioeconomic
7 or other environmental studies or endangered and
8 threatened species and marine mammal surveys re-
9 quested by the Governor of Florida or the Joint
10 Task Force to minimize the uncertainty about the
11 effects of all preleasing activities, leasing, and explo-
12 ration, production, and drilling activities on the ma-
13 rine environment, the coastal environment, and the
14 human environment of the State of Florida.

15 **SEC. 5. JOINT TASK FORCE.**

16 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There shall be established a
17 Joint Federal-State Outer Continental Shelf Task Force
18 for the purpose of carrying out the responsibilities as-
19 signed such Joint Task Force under this Act.

20 (b) MEMBERSHIP.—The Joint Task Force estab-
21 lished under subsection (a) shall consist of—

22 (1) one representative each from the Environ-
23 mental Protection Agency, the Minerals Manage-
24 ment Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric

1 Administration, and the United States Fish and
2 Wildlife Service;

3 (2) four representatives from the State of Flor-
4 ida appointed from a list provided by the Governor
5 of such State; and

6 (3) three members appointed by the Secretary
7 of Commerce from a list of individuals nominated by
8 the National Academy of Sciences who are profes-
9 sional scientists in the fields of physical oceanog-
10 raphy, marine ecology, and social science.

11 (c) COMPENSATION.—(1) Members of the Joint Task
12 Force appointed under subsection (b)(3), while performing
13 official duties under this Act shall receive compensation
14 for travel and transportation expenses under section 5703
15 of title 5, United States Code.

16 (2) Members of the Joint Task Force appointed
17 under subsection (b)(3) may be compensated at a rate to
18 be fixed by the Secretary of Commerce, but not in excess
19 of the maximum rate of pay for grade GS–18 provided
20 in the General Schedule under section 5332 of title 5,
21 United States Code, for each day such member spends
22 performing the duties of the Joint Task Force.

23 **SEC. 6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENTS.**

24 Approval of the first exploration plan submitted after
25 the date of enactment of this Act under section 11 of the

1 Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1340) in
2 each of the 3 areas described in section 2 (1), (2), and
3 (3) shall be subject to the requirement of a detailed state-
4 ment submitted under section 102(2)(C) of the National
5 Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C.
6 4332(2)(C)).

7 **SEC. 7. EFFECT ON OTHER LAWS.**

8 Nothing in this Act shall affect any prohibition in any
9 other law against any activities on the outer Continental
10 Shelf.

11 **SEC. 8. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

12 There are authorized to be appropriated to the Sec-
13 retary \$3,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 1998, 1999,
14 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003 for carrying out this Act.

15 **SEC. 9. DEFINITIONS.**

16 For the purposes of this Act—

17 (1) terms defined in the Outer Continental
18 Shelf Lands Act have the meaning given such terms
19 in that Act;

20 (2) references to specific outer Continental
21 Shelf planning areas shall be to areas so designated
22 in the Department of the Interior Outer Continental
23 Shelf Five Year Oil and Gas Leasing Program,
24 1997–2002;

1 (3) the term “adequate” means sufficiently
2 complete to enable necessary decisions to be made
3 under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, and
4 of sufficient scientific quality to be repeatable, reli-
5 able, and valid in measurements and analysis with
6 appropriate methods and subject;

7 (4) the term “Joint Task Force” means the
8 Joint Federal-State Outer Continental Shelf Task
9 Force established under section 5;

10 (5) the term “National Research Council’s re-
11 ports” means—

12 (A) the report entitled “The Adequacy of
13 Environmental Information for Outer Continen-
14 tal Shelf Oil and Gas Decisions: Florida and
15 California” issued in 1989 by the Council’s
16 Committee to Review the Outer Continental
17 Shelf Environmental Studies Program and sup-
18 ported by the President’s Outer Continental
19 Shelf Leasing and Development Task Force
20 through Department of the Interior Contract
21 No. 1435000130495; and

22 (B) parts I, II, and III of the “Assessment
23 of the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf Environ-
24 mental Studies Program” issued in 1990 and

1 1992 by the committee referred to in subpara-
2 graph (A), with support from Department of
3 the Interior Contract No. 14-12-001-30342;
4 and

5 (6) the term “preleasing activities” means ac-
6 tivities conducted before a lease sale is held, and in-
7 cludes the scheduling of a lease, requests for indus-
8 try interest, calls for information and nominations,
9 area identifications, publication of draft or final en-
10 vironmental impact statements, notices of sale, and
11 any form of rotary drilling; but such term does not
12 include environmental, geologic, geophysical, eco-
13 nomic, engineering, or other scientific analyses, stud-
14 ies, and evaluations.

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