

105TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 1418

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 20, 1998

Referred to the Committee on Science, and in addition to the Committee on Resources, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

AN ACT

To promote the research, identification, assessment, exploration, and development of methane hydrate resources, 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. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Methane Hydrate Re-
5 search and Development Act of 1998”.

1 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

2 In this Act:

3 (1) CONTRACT.—The term “contract” means a
4 procurement contract within the meaning of 6303 of
5 title 31, United States Code.

6 (2) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT.—The term “co-
7 operative agreement” means a cooperative agree-
8 ment within the meaning of section 6305 of title 31,
9 United States Code.

10 (3) GRANT.—The term “grant” means a grant
11 agreement within the meaning of section 6304 of
12 title 31, United States Code.

13 (4) METHANE HYDRATE.—The term “methane
14 hydrate” means a methane clathrate that—

15 (A) is in the form of a methane-water ice-
16 like crystalline material; and

17 (B) is stable and occurs naturally in deep-
18 ocean and permafrost areas.

19 (5) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
20 the Secretary of Energy.

21 (6) SECRETARY OF DEFENSE.—The term “Sec-
22 retary of Defense” means the Secretary of Defense,
23 acting through the Secretary of the Navy.

24 (7) SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.—The term
25 “Secretary of the Interior” means the Secretary of

1 the Interior, acting through the Director of the
2 United States Geological Survey.

3 (8) DIRECTOR.—The term “Director” means
4 the Director of the National Science Foundation.

5 **SEC. 3. METHANE HYDRATE RESEARCH AND DEVELOP-**
6 **MENT PROGRAM.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—

8 (1) COMMENCEMENT OF PROGRAM.—Not later
9 than 180 days after the date of enactment of this
10 Act, the Secretary, in consultation with the Sec-
11 retary of Defense, the Secretary of the Interior, and
12 the Director, shall commence a program of methane
13 hydrate research and development.

14 (2) DESIGNATIONS.—The Secretary, the Sec-
15 retary of Defense, the Secretary of the Interior, and
16 the Director shall designate individuals to implement
17 this Act.

18 (3) MEETINGS.—The individuals designated
19 under paragraph (2) shall meet not less frequently
20 than every 120 days to review the progress of the
21 program under paragraph (1) and make rec-
22 ommendations on future activities.

23 (b) GRANTS, CONTRACTS, AND COOPERATIVE
24 AGREEMENTS.—

1 (1) ASSISTANCE AND COORDINATION.—The
2 Secretary may award grants or contracts to, or enter
3 into cooperative agreements with, universities and
4 industrial enterprises to—

5 (A) conduct basic and applied research to
6 identify, explore, assess, and develop methane
7 hydrate as a source of energy;

8 (B) assist in developing technologies re-
9 quired for efficient and environmentally sound
10 development of methane hydrate resources;

11 (C) undertake research programs to pro-
12 vide safe means of transport and storage of
13 methane produced from methane hydrates;

14 (D) promote education and training in
15 methane hydrate resources research and re-
16 source development;

17 (E) conduct basic and applied research to
18 assess and mitigate the environmental impacts
19 of hydrate degassing, both natural and that as-
20 sociated with commercial development; and

21 (F) develop technologies to reduce the
22 risks of drilling through methane hydrates.

23 (2) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary may estab-
24 lish an advisory panel consisting of experts from in-
25 dustry, academia, and Federal agencies to advise the

1 Secretary on potential applications of methane hy-
2 drate and assist in developing recommendations and
3 priorities for the methane hydrate research and de-
4 velopment program carried out under this section.

5 (c) LIMITATIONS.—

6 (1) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—Not more
7 than 5 percent of the amount made available to
8 carry out this section for a fiscal year may be used
9 by the Secretary for expenses associated with the ad-
10 ministration of the program under subsection (a)(1).

11 (2) CONSTRUCTION COSTS.—None of the funds
12 made available to carry out this section may be used
13 for the construction of a new building or the acquisi-
14 tion, expansion, remodeling, or alteration of an exist-
15 ing building (including site grading and improve-
16 ment and architect fees).

17 (d) RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SECRETARY.—In car-
18 rying out subsection (b)(1), the Secretary shall—

19 (1) facilitate and develop partnerships among
20 government, industry, and academia to research,
21 identify, assess, and explore methane hydrate re-
22 sources;

23 (2) undertake programs to develop basic infor-
24 mation necessary for promoting long-term interest in
25 methane hydrate resources as an energy source;

1 (3) ensure that the data and information devel-
 2 oped through the program are accessible and widely
 3 disseminated as needed and appropriate;

4 (4) promote cooperation among agencies that
 5 are developing technologies that may hold promise
 6 for methane hydrate resource development; and

7 (5) report annually to Congress on accomplish-
 8 ments under this Act.

9 **SEC. 4. AMENDMENT TO THE MINING AND MINERALS POL-**
 10 **ICY ACT OF 1970.**

11 Section 201 of the Mining and Minerals Policy Act
 12 of 1970 (30 U.S.C. 1901) is amended—

13 (1) by redesignating paragraphs (6) and (7) as
 14 paragraphs (7) and (8), respectively;

15 (2) by inserting after paragraph (5) the follow-
 16 ing:

17 “(6) the term ‘methane hydrate’ means a meth-
 18 ane clathrate that—

19 “(A) is in the form of a methane-water ice-
 20 like crystalline material; and

21 “(B) is stable and occurs naturally in
 22 deep-ocean and permafrost areas.”; and

23 (3) in paragraph (7) (as redesignated by para-
 24 graph (1))—

1 (A) in subparagraph (F), by striking
2 “and”;

3 (B) by redesignating subparagraph (G) as
4 subparagraph (H); and

5 (C) by inserting after subparagraph (F)
6 the following:

7 “(G) methane hydrate; and”.

8 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

9 There are authorized to be appropriated such sums
10 as are necessary to carry out this Act.

Passed the Senate July 17, 1998.

Attest:

GARY SISCO,
Secretary.