

106TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 330

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 27, 1999

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

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## 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 1999”.

1 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

2 In this Act:

3 (1) CONTRACT.—The term “contract” means a  
4 procurement contract within the meaning of section  
5 6303 of 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 awarded under a grant agreement, within the mean-  
12 ing of section 6304 of title 31, United States Code.

13 (4) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The  
14 term “institution of higher education” means an in-  
15 stitution of higher education, within the meaning of  
16 section 102(a)(1) of the Higher Education Act of  
17 1965.

18 (5) METHANE HYDRATE.—The term “methane  
19 hydrate” means a methane clathrate that—

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

22 (B) is stable and occurs naturally in deep-  
23 ocean and permafrost areas.

24 (6) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means  
25 the Secretary of Energy.

1           (7) SECRETARY OF DEFENSE.—The term “Sec-  
2       retary of Defense” means the Secretary of Defense,  
3       acting through the Secretary of the Navy.

4           (8) SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.—The term  
5       “Secretary of the Interior” means the Secretary of  
6       the Interior, acting through the Director of the  
7       United States Geological Survey.

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

10 **SEC. 3. METHANE HYDRATE RESEARCH AND DEVELOP-**  
11 **MENT PROGRAM.**

12       (a) IN GENERAL.—

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

19           (2) DESIGNATIONS.—The Secretary, the Sec-  
20       retary of Defense, the Secretary of the Interior, and  
21       the Director shall designate individuals to carry out  
22       this section.

23           (3) MEETINGS.—The individuals designated  
24       under paragraph (2) shall meet not later than 120  
25       days after the date on which all such individuals are

1 designated and not less frequently than every 120  
2 days thereafter to—

3 (A) review the progress of the program  
4 under paragraph (1); and

5 (B) make recommendations on future ac-  
6 tivities to occur subsequent to the meeting.

7 (b) GRANTS, CONTRACTS, AND COOPERATIVE  
8 AGREEMENTS.—

9 (1) ASSISTANCE AND COORDINATION.—The  
10 Secretary may award grants or contracts to, or enter  
11 into cooperative agreements with, institutions of  
12 higher education and industrial enterprises to—

13 (A) conduct basic and applied research to  
14 identify, explore, assess, and develop methane  
15 hydrate as a source of energy;

16 (B) assist in developing technologies re-  
17 quired for efficient and environmentally sound  
18 development of methane hydrate resources;

19 (C) undertake research programs to pro-  
20 vide safe means of transport and storage of  
21 methane produced from methane hydrates;

22 (D) promote education and training in  
23 methane hydrate resource research and re-  
24 source development;

1 (E) conduct basic and applied research to  
2 assess and mitigate the environmental impacts  
3 of hydrate degassing (including both natural  
4 degassing and degassing associated with com-  
5 mercial development); and

6 (F) develop technologies to reduce the  
7 risks of drilling through methane hydrates.

8 (2) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary may estab-  
9 lish an advisory panel consisting of experts from in-  
10 dustry, institutions of higher education, and Federal  
11 agencies to—

12 (A) advise the Secretary on potential appli-  
13 cations of methane hydrate; and

14 (B) assist in developing recommendations  
15 and priorities for the methane hydrate research  
16 and development program carried out under  
17 subsection (a)(1).

18 (c) LIMITATIONS.—

19 (1) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—Not more  
20 than 5 percent of the amount made available to  
21 carry out this section for a fiscal year may be used  
22 by the Secretary for expenses associated with the ad-  
23 ministration of the program carried out under sub-  
24 section (a)(1).

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

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

9           (1) facilitate and develop partnerships among  
10      government, industry, and institutions of higher edu-  
11      cation to research, identify, assess, and explore  
12      methane hydrate resources;

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

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

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

22          (5) report annually to Congress on accomplish-  
23      ments under this section.

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

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

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

7 (2) by inserting after paragraph (5) the fol-  
8 lowing:

9 “(6) The term ‘methane hydrate’ means a  
10 methane clathrate that—

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

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

15 (3) in paragraph (7) (as redesignated by para-  
16 graph (1))—

17 (A) in subparagraph (F), by striking  
18 “and” at the end;

19 (B) by redesignating subparagraph (G) as  
20 subparagraph (H); and

21 (C) by inserting after subparagraph (F)  
22 the following:

23 “(G) methane hydrate; and”.

1 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

2       There are authorized to be appropriated such sums  
3 as are necessary to carry out this Act.

Passed the Senate April 19, 1999.

Attest:

GARY SISCO,  
*Secretary.*