

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 32

Expressing the sense of Congress that the 40th anniversary of the oil spill off the coast of Santa Barbara, California, should be remembered as an ecological and economic disaster that triggered major environmental legislation and helped launch the modern environmental movement, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 28, 2009

Mrs. CAPPS (for herself, Mr. FARR, and Ms. WOOLSEY) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress that the 40th anniversary of the oil spill off the coast of Santa Barbara, California, should be remembered as an ecological and economic disaster that triggered major environmental legislation and helped launch the modern environmental movement, and for other purposes.

Whereas January 28, 2009, marks the 40th anniversary of an oil spill at Union Oil Company's Platform A, located six miles off the coast of Santa Barbara, California;

Whereas over 11 days, an estimated 3,000,000 gallons of crude oil was released into the Pacific Ocean, creating an 800 square-mile slick;

Whereas incoming tides brought the oil to beaches from Rincon Point to Goleta, damaging 35 miles of coastline, as well as all four of the northern Channel Islands;

Whereas the impact of the oil spill on marine wildlife was disastrous, killing dozens of sea lions and dolphins;

Whereas it has been estimated that approximately 9,000 birds died as the oil stripped their feathers of the natural waterproofing that kept them afloat;

Whereas multitudes of fish are believed to have been killed, and many others fled the area, causing economic harm to the region's fishermen;

Whereas a great number of gray whales migrating from the Gulf of Alaska to their calving and breeding grounds in Baja, Mexico, were forced to avoid the polluted Santa Barbara Channel, which is their main route south;

Whereas many consider the publicity surrounding the oil spill to have been a major impetus to the modern environmental movement;

Whereas following the oil spill, a broad environmental grassroots movement was founded leading to the first Earth Day in November 1969;

Whereas only days after the spill began, Get Oil Out! was founded in Santa Barbara and collected 100,000 signatures on a petition banning offshore oil drilling;

Whereas the Environmental Defense Center in Santa Barbara was founded and the first Environmental Studies program was started at the University of California, Santa Barbara;

Whereas the California Coastal Commission was created from a statewide initiative to protect the State's coastal areas,

and the State Lands Commission banned offshore drilling for 16 years;

Whereas in the years following the oil spill, the State and Federal governments enacted many environmental protection laws, including the California Environmental Quality Act and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, which led the way to the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency;

Whereas Santa Barbara News-Press Editor Thomas Storke said: “Never in my long lifetime have I ever seen such an aroused populace at the grassroots level. This oil pollution has done something I have never seen before in Santa Barbara—it has united citizens of all political persuasions in a truly nonpartisan cause.”; and

Whereas President Richard Nixon said: “It is sad that it was necessary that Santa Barbara should be the example that had to bring it to the attention of the American people. What is involved is the use of our resources of the sea and of the land in a more effective way and with more concern for preserving the beauty and the natural resources that are so important to any kind of society that we want for the future. The Santa Barbara incident has frankly touched the conscience of the American people.”: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring),* That it is the sense of Congress that—

3 (1) the 40th anniversary of the oil spill off the
4 coast of Santa Barbara, California, should be re-
5 membered as an ecological and economic disaster
6 that triggered major environmental legislation and

1 helped launch the modern environmental movement;
2 and

3 (2) this anniversary is a timely reminder of the
4 critical importance of moving our economy away
5 from its crippling dependence on fossil fuels and to-
6 wards a clean, renewable energy future.

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