

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1215

To amend the Methane Hydrate Research and Development Act of 2000 to provide for the development of methane hydrate as a commercially viable source of energy.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 6, 2015

Ms. MURKOWSKI introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

A BILL

To amend the Methane Hydrate Research and Development Act of 2000 to provide for the development of methane hydrate as a commercially viable source of energy.

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 Amendments Act of 2015”.

1 **SEC. 2. AMENDMENTS TO THE METHANE HYDRATE RE-**
2 **SEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2000.**

3 (a) FINDINGS.—Section 2 of the Methane Hydrate
4 Research and Development Act of 2000 (30 U.S.C. 2001)
5 is amended—

6 (1) in paragraph (4), by striking “and” at the
7 end;

8 (2) in paragraph (5), by striking the period at
9 the end and inserting a semicolon; and

10 (3) by adding at the end the following:

11 “(6) methane is a powerful greenhouse gas that
12 may be exchanged between terrestrial methane hy-
13 drate reservoirs and the atmosphere by natural or
14 anthropogenic processes; and

15 “(7) the short- and long-term release of meth-
16 ane from arctic or marine reservoirs may have sig-
17 nificant environmental effects, including global cli-
18 mate change.”.

19 (b) METHANE HYDRATE RESEARCH AND DEVELOP-
20 MENT PROGRAM.—

21 (1) IN GENERAL.—Section 4 of the Methane
22 Hydrate Research and Development Act of 2000 (30
23 U.S.C. 2003) is amended by striking subsection (b)
24 and inserting the following:

1 “(b) GRANTS, CONTRACTS, COOPERATIVE AGREE-
2 MENTS, INTERAGENCY FUNDS TRANSFER AGREEMENTS,
3 AND FIELD WORK PROPOSALS.—

4 “(1) ASSISTANCE AND COORDINATION.—In car-
5 rying out the program of methane hydrate research
6 and development authorized by this section, the Sec-
7 retary may award grants to, or enter into contracts
8 or cooperative agreements with, institutions that—

9 “(A) conduct basic and applied research to
10 identify, explore, assess, and develop methane
11 hydrate as a commercially viable source of en-
12 ergy;

13 “(B) identify and characterize methane hy-
14 drate resources using remote sensing and seis-
15 mic data, including the characterization of hy-
16 drate concentrations in marine reservoirs in the
17 Gulf of Mexico or the Atlantic Ocean Basin by
18 the date that is 4 years after the date of enact-
19 ment of the Methane Hydrate Research and
20 Development Amendments Act of 2015;

21 “(C) develop technologies required for effi-
22 cient and environmentally sound development of
23 methane hydrate resources;

24 “(D) conduct basic and applied research to
25 assess and mitigate the environmental impact of

hydrate degassing (including natural degassing and degassing associated with commercial development);

“(E) develop technologies to reduce the risks of drilling through methane hydrates;

“(F) conduct exploratory drilling, well testing, and production testing operations on permafrost and nonpermafrost gas hydrates in support of the activities authorized by this paragraph, including—

“(i) drilling of a test well and performing a long-term hydrate production test on land in the United States Arctic region by the date that is 4 years after the date of enactment of the Methane Hydrate Research and Development Amendments Act of 2015;

“(ii) drilling of a test well and performing a long-term hydrate production test in a marine environment by the date that is 10 years after the date of enactment of the Methane Hydrate Research and Development Amendments Act of 2015; and

1 “(iii) drilling a full-scale production
2 test well at a location to be determined by
3 the Secretary; or

4 “(G) expand education and training pro-
5 grams in methane hydrate resource research
6 and resource development through fellowships
7 or other means for graduate education and
8 training.

9 “(2) ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING.—The Sec-
10 retary shall conduct a long-term environmental mon-
11 itoring program to study the effects of production
12 from methane hydrate reservoirs.

13 “(3) COMPETITIVE PEER REVIEW.—Funds
14 made available under paragraphs (1) and (2) shall
15 be made available based on a competitive process
16 using external scientific peer review of proposed re-
17 search.”.

18 (2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 4(e)
19 of the Methane Hydrate Research and Development
20 Act of 2000 (30 U.S.C. 2003(e)) is amended in the
21 matter preceding paragraph (1) by striking “sub-
22 section (b)(1)” and inserting “paragraphs (1) and
23 (2) of subsection (b)”.

24 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—The
25 Methane Hydrate Research and Development Act of 2000

1 is amended by striking section 7 (30 U.S.C. 2006) and
2 inserting the following:

3 **“SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

4 “There are authorized to be appropriated to the Sec-
5 retary such sums as are necessary to carry out this Act.”.

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