

Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute, and the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology are just a few of the various other organizations that have a vested interest in methane hydrate research.

I also want to make particular mention of the work that is being done at the University of Hawaii and again recognize Senator AKAKA for his efforts in advancing similar legislation in the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1753 presents a thoughtful and common sense approach to expanding future energy choices. Through continued pursuit of progress in science and technology, we can assist in providing future generations with an abundant supply of a clean and reasonably priced energy source.

I urge my colleagues to support the Gas Hydrate Research and Development Act, and I thank my chairman, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER), for his support and his help.

Mr. Speaker, I submit the statement of Senator AKAKA in support of H.R. 1753 for the RECORD.

REMARKS OF SENATOR DANIEL K. AKAKA
REGARDING METHANE HYDRATE LEGISLATION

I believe that H.R. 1753, and the Senate counterpart bill, S. 330, are important energy research bills that Congress should enact this session. Methane hydrate research has strong, bipartisan support. Senators Lott, Graham, Craig and Landrieu have cosponsored S. 330.

The discovery of methane hydrates presents a research and development opportunity with major energy security implications. The bill will serve the long-term goal of developing new energy supplies as well as the near-term goal of increased safety and recovery of conventional oil and gas.

Significant, widespread deposits of gas hydrates have been detected, but have not been characterized, all over the globe. The data on this resource may surprise you.

Worldwide, the amount of methane trapped in gas hydrate form is estimated to be 10,000 gigatons—twice the carbon found in all other fossil fuels and 3,000 times the amount of methane present in the atmosphere. Scientists at the U.S. Geological Survey estimate that 320,000 trillion cubic feet of natural gas exists in methane hydrate form in the U.S.—a staggering resource.

In the United States, on-shore deposits are found in the arctic regions of Alaska. However, deep sea methane hydrate deposits are the most abundant source of methane, occurring at depths greater than 300 meters. Marine geologists have identified large deposits off the coasts of Alaska, Louisiana, Texas, New Jersey, Oregon and North and South Carolina.

Research is needed to determine whether we can produce natural gas from these vast reserves. Natural gas from methane hydrates will never be realized unless we undertake a serious research and development program outlined in these bills.

The U.S. currently lags other countries in exploring this exciting new energy source. Japan and India have launched aggressive R&D programs to explore methane hydrates. Some believe that Japanese commercial production is only a decade away. Clearly we are falling behind in our efforts to understand this energy source. In the face of dwindling energy resources and increased reliance on energy imports, we can hardly afford to miss this important opportunity.

In addition to potential use as an energy source, methane hydrate deposits also represent a challenge to conventional oil and gas extraction. Hydrates influence physical properties of ocean sediments, particularly strength and stability. Characterizing hydrate formation and breakdown is important for the safety of deep offshore drilling and other deep sea operations.

Given these research, technology, and energy security considerations, it would be shortsighted not to invest in our future by assessing and developing gas hydrates. I urge you to pass H.R. 1753.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 1753, the Methane Hydrate Research and Development Act of 1999. This measure will promote the research, identification, assessment, exploration, and development of methane hydrate resources.

As a Member of the House Science Committee, I recognize the importance of our natural resources. And as a Houstonian and Texan, I have a vested interest in natural and fossil fuels.

Natural gas is an important source of clean efficient energy. Today, natural gas comes primarily from geological formations in which methane molecules—the primary component of natural gas—exist in the form of gas.

Methane also exists in ice-like formations called hydrates. Hydrates trap methane molecules inside a cage of frozen water. Hydrates are found on or under seabeds and under permafrost.

The amount of methane trapped in hydrates is largely unknown, but it is very large. A number of scientists believe that hydrates contain more than twice as much energy as all the world's coal, oil, and natural gas combined.

Currently, we do not know how to produce a meaningful amount of energy from hydrates. Scientists around the world are trying to discover cost effective production methods. They are also trying to assess the size of the resource base, to explore problems hydrates cause during the production of offshore natural gas, and to explore additional uses for hydrates.

If scientists can find a way to safely extract the gas, they will have tapped an enormous new clean-burning energy supply. This act direct the Secretary of Energy to commence a gas hydrate research and development program. In conjunction with the Secretaries of Defense and the Interior, along with the Director of the NSF, the Secretary of Energy is to commence this research. This measure will allow the Secretary to award grants or contracts or even enter into cooperative agreements with institutions of higher education and industrial enterprises to conduct basic and applied research, to identify, explore, assess, and develop gas hydrate as a source of energy.

Mr. Speaker, it is vital that we continue to search for new sources of energy that will reduce our dependence on foreign sources, further protecting our energy security, and that will protect the environment from further harm.

Mr. MASCARA. Mr. Speaker, in an era of increasingly volatile energy prices and dwindling energy resources, it is imperative that the U.S. fund research for alternative energy sources now so that we are not left out in the cold when the cost of or inaccessibility to traditional fossil fuels makes heating our homes and fueling our factories impossible. H.R. 1753, the Methane Hydrate Research and De-

velopment Act of 1999, attempts to stave off that threat by directing the Secretary of Energy to coordinate a research and development program with the Secretaries of Defense, Interior and the Director of the National Science Foundation to develop methane hydrate resources.

Methane hydrate, a frozen mixture of methane and water, is found in sea sediments of the outer continental regions under unstable, high pressure conditions and in arctic regions where permafrost conditions exist. Methane hydrate, once safely extracted from these regions promises to become a viable source of alternative energy. The most promising area of research seems to be in harvesting methane hydrates from the outer continental regions. A 1997 U.S. Geological Survey appraisal of natural gas hydrate resources in the U.S. estimated that about 200,000 trillion cubic feet exist. It has been estimated that one 50 by 150 kilometer area off the coast of North and South Carolina could supply the energy needs of the United States for over 70 years.

Unfortunately these estimates do us no good without investments to develop the technology to safely and economically harvest methane hydrates. Passage of H.R. 1753 is a crucial first step to developing economical and ecologically sensitive technology that allows the United States to meet our energy needs in the 21st century. I support passage of H.R. 1753 and urge my colleagues to support passage of this important legislation.

Mr. DOYLE. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BONILLA). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1753, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to promote the research, identification, assessment, exploration, and development of gas hydrate resources, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE
SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that pursuant to Public Law 100-696, the Chair, on behalf of the Democratic Leader, announces the appointment of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) as a member of the United States Capitol Preservation

Commission, vice the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN).

CONCERNING ECONOMIC, HUMANITARIAN, AND OTHER ASSISTANCE TO NORTHERN SOMALIA

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 20) concerning economic, humanitarian, and other assistance to the northern part of Somalia.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 20

Whereas in the area in the northern part of Somalia, referred to as Somaliland by the elected representatives of the people living there, a significant level of economic and social stability has been achieved, promising likely success for international and United States sponsored economic development and humanitarian programs;

Whereas economic development, humanitarian, and other forms of assistance to the people of such area from international organizations, the United States, and other foreign nations, has been diminished, delayed, or canceled due to questions about the assertion of sovereignty by those people as a nation separate from Somalia;

Whereas provision of economic development and humanitarian assistance to the people of such area does not constitute recognition of any particular claim to sovereignty by any de facto government of the region; and

Whereas the fundamental purpose of economic development, humanitarian, and other aid is to relieve human suffering: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Congress—

(1) urges all international organizations, foreign countries, and agencies of the United States Government engaged in economic development, humanitarian, and other forms of bilateral or multilateral assistance to evaluate the ability of such assistance to achieve the amelioration of human suffering in each region of Somalia, including the northern part of Somalia referred to as Somaliland;

(2) urges the President not to delay, diminish, or cancel the amounts and kinds of assistance otherwise appropriate to the people of certain regions in Somalia because conditions may not be propitious for such assistance in other regions of Somalia;

(3) urges the President not to delay, diminish, or cancel the amounts and kinds of such assistance directed toward any region in Somalia waiting for a permanent resolution of the efforts now underway to forge a new government for Somalia;

(4) calls upon all Somali parties to continue to work toward a permanent end to the civil strife there and the adoption of a permanent governmental structure most conducive to the well-being and basic human rights of all Somali people; and

(5) calls on the President to—

(A) work with the international community to help bring an end to the suffering of the Somali people and work toward a negotiated settlement of the Somali conflict;

(B) increase the levels of humanitarian assistance provided to Somalia through local and international groups;

(C) provide funding for demobilization and demining efforts in Somalia;

(D) provide assistance in the health and education sectors of Somalia; and

(E) work with other donor groups to assist the people of Somalia in reconstruction and development.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Con. Res. 20, the concurrent resolution now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. GILMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, the Horn of Africa is no longer as strategically important to our Nation as it once was. However, we cannot ignore it as an area of a region with past and continuing instability.

The hostility of the Islamic fundamentalist regime of Sudan toward our Nation, the regrettable ongoing war between Eritrea and Ethiopia, and the violent clashes between warlords in southern Somalia all bear watching. Because of these problems, it is in our national interest to identify those portions of the Horn which have demonstrated a degree of stability and governance and to encourage them. Northern Somalia, and particularly the area once defined as the British protectorate of Somaliland, is one such area.

Our distinguished colleagues, the gentleman from California (Mr. CAMPBELL) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE), traveled to that remote region last year. We are grateful to them for their energetic diligent service on the Subcommittee on Africa. This resolution is a direct result of their eyewitness accounts of a people rebuilding their lives and economies after a long troubled period.

Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to fully support this measure, H. Con. Res. 20.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution, H. Con. Res. 20.

□ 1300

Let me once again thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN); the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE), chairman of the subcommittee; and the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. GEJDENSON) for bringing this resolution to the floor.

I would also like to thank the primary sponsor, the gentleman from

California (Mr. CAMPBELL), who traveled on CODEL Campbell to Somaliland last year, where we had the opportunity to meet with President Egal.

This resolution expresses several points: Support for humanitarian and targeted development assistance for Somaliland. It encourages efforts at democratization and transparency. It recognizes the level of stability in the region. It encourages freedom of the press. It encourages dialogue with other regions in Somalia, and it also calls on the U.S. to provide funding for health and education.

When Somalia gained independence from Britain and Italy, Somalia was left with two distinct systems of governing by virtue of the fact that they were controlled by different colonial powers.

The governing body of Northern Somalia was colonized by the British. In the south it was colonized by the Italians. As we know, Djibouti, an independent country before their independence, was colonized by the French.

The various systems have something to do we believe with the relative stability and instability of these regions. Northern Somalia, which was colonized by the British, was sort of left intact by the colonial hierarchy. They continued to allow traditional leaders to function. They allowed local leaders to be able to project themselves, therefore creating a more stable environment when independence came.

Whereas, their Italian counterparts replaced the indigenous structures and they had their own Italian model for Southern Somalia around Mogadishu. And so, the lack of local leaders being recognized in the south by the form of colonization that the Italians had as contrasted with that of the north is one of the reasons to explain the differences in those two regions.

"The Great Conference of the Northern Peoples" convened a meeting in May of 1991 and established the part of Somalia which the people in the north call Somaliland. It also promulgated a new Constitution for that region. President Egal was reelected to office in 1997 for another 5-year term by winning 223 votes in their 315-member national communities conference.

Egal's relationship with other clans in Somalia has improved over the past years due to his efforts of reaching out to other clan leaders and once again having had visibility before independence.

Somalia is one example of a collapsed system of government by the north, as we can see in the past. And so, the opportunity for us to visit there with CODEL Campbell to see the schools, the hospitals, the civil servants functioning and our recent visit by President Egal encourages us to continue to support the efforts that are happening there.

Also, as the war continues between Ethiopia and Eritrea, we see that sides in Somalia are being taken by leaders