

I recently met with many glass manufacturers in Western Pennsylvania, and they explained to me some of the challenges they are facing. Kopp Glass in Pittsburgh, for example, has seen their natural gas cost rise by 83 percent over the last year, eating into the company's profits by 50 percent and also eating into their opportunities to grow their business.

General Shale Products, a brick manufacturer, has announced they are going to close after 40 years of operation because of high natural gas prices. A steel manufacturer has recently asked us to do something about it.

This bill will ensure that the Commodity Futures Trading Commission has the tools it needs to find and prosecute market manipulators.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT).

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4473, the Commodity Trading Commission Reauthorization Act. And I support the underlying bill, and I salute the chairman's efforts to reauthorize the CFTC. But I do have a little concern with the specific section of the bill dealing with natural gas price transparency. Title II of the bill contains new regulatory burdens on the trading of natural gas, such as future contracts, over-the-counter transactions and cash market purchases. While these provisions will place unwarranted and open-ended regulatory burdens on legitimate business activities, they will in no way reduce volatility or lower the price of natural gas. See, the Commission currently has full authority now to examine and oversee the futures market and to request complete trading information from any participant in the futures market if it suspects price manipulation is occurring.

But the bill now, with that provision, would shift the regulatory intervention away from fraud manipulation to an undefined standard that is not based upon law but is based upon legitimate movements in natural gas prices. I would just urge the conferees, when this bill goes to conference, not to add any new missions to the responsibility and take away from the core responsibilities of the CFTC.

Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of the time.

Mr. Speaker, the natural gas language contained in the committee bill makes two changes to the CFTC's current regulatory program to detect and deter manipulation or attempted manipulation.

First, upon a finding that there has been a significant and highly unusual change in the market price of natural gas, the CFTC is required to determine what had caused that price change.

Second, persons with futures or option positions in natural gas are re-

quired to keep records of those trades and other related transactions and to submit those records to the CFTC upon request.

In the committee's view, and in my view, this is a reasonable compromise that does not add significant new costs to transactions in natural gas, whether futures or options contracts or other transactions used in over-the-counter strategies of most of the major firms involved in the natural gas markets on a daily basis.

This new recordkeeping requirement is the only part of the legislation that imposes any new regulatory mechanism. The CFTC is not required to impose itself into any new market arena and will not as a result of this legislation. The bill requirements are unobtrusive, contain no burdensome new costs and will be used sparingly.

We have seen over the years, over the course of the last half year, an energy sector that is under great stress. And the price response to that stress has been of great concern to all of us. This bill does nothing to add to that stress, and it should be adopted today.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. POMBO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to contribute to the debate on H.R. 4473 which is currently under consideration. Title II of the bill creates new regulatory authority for the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) to investigate suspected manipulation of the natural gas futures markets.

Currently, the price of natural gas in the United States is floating at a high near \$14 MMBtu. When compared to most nations around the world, this amount is four, five, even fourteen times higher than some developing countries! I am encouraged by the attempt of some of my colleagues to correct this serious problem, but I have serious concerns with the manner by which we address this issue in legislation.

As Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan has made very clear in a recent letter to Chairman MIKE OXLEY, the fundamental problem of natural gas price spikes is a shortage of supply. The only way this can be solved, and Chairman Greenspan appears to agree, is through increased production domestically and less barriers to liquefied natural gas imports. When the supply increases, natural gas prices will most certainly fall.

While I will support passage of H.R. 4473, I believe Title II is a misguided approach that will not ultimately result in lower prices for natural gas. Sadly, some Members of Congress who support Title II of this bill have consistently opposed additional domestic production of energy supplies. They may believe that by voting for this legislation today, they will receive further cover for their positions, when in fact these Members' positions have led to our nation's high energy prices.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TERRY). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4473.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof)

the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the bill just considered.

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

There was no objection.

ESTABLISHING THE TASK FORCE ON OCEAN POLICY

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 599) establishing the Task Force on Ocean Policy.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 599

Whereas the House of Representatives is in need of a Task Force on Ocean Policy to review the final report of the United States Commission on Ocean Policy, entitled "An Ocean Blueprint for the 21st Century", which affects the jurisdiction of several committees of the House, including the Committee on Resources, the Committee on Science, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and the Committee on International Relations: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved,

SECTION 1. ESTABLISHMENT.

There is hereby established a Task Force on Ocean Policy.

SEC. 2. COMPOSITION.

The task force shall be composed of 12 members appointed by the Speaker, of whom 5 shall be appointed on the recommendation of the Minority leader. The Speaker shall designate one member as chairman. A vacancy in the membership of the task force shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

SEC. 3. JURISDICTION.

The task force may develop recommendations and report to the House on the final report of the United States Commission on Ocean Policy, making recommendations for a national ocean policy, entitled "An Ocean Blueprint for the 21st Century".

SEC. 4. PROCEDURE.

(a) Except as provided in paragraphs (1) and (2), rule XI shall apply to the task force to the extent not inconsistent with this resolution.

(1) Clause 1(b) and clause 2(m)(1)(B) of rule XI shall not apply to the task force.

(2) The task force is not required to adopt written rules to implement the provisions of clause 4 of rule XI.

(b) Clause 10(b) of rule X shall not apply to the task force.

SEC. 5. STAFF; FUNDING.

(a) The chairman may employ and fix the compensation of such staff as the chairman considers necessary to carry out this resolution. To the greatest extent practicable, the task force shall utilize the services of staff of employing entities of the House. At the request of the chairman, staff of employing entities of the House or a joint committee may be detailed to the task force to carry out this resolution and shall be deemed to be staff of the task force.

(b) There shall be paid out of the applicable accounts of the House \$450,000 for the expenses of the task force. Such payments shall be made on vouchers signed by the chairman and approved in the manner directed by the Committee on House Administration. Amounts made available under this subsection shall be expended in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Committee on House Administration.

SEC. 6. REPORTING.

The task force shall report to the House the final results of its investigation and study, together with detailed findings and such recommendations as it may deem advisable, as soon as practicable and in no event later than on June 30, 2006.

SEC. 7. DISSOLUTION AND WINDUP OF AFFAIRS.

The task force shall cease to exist after July 31, 2006.

SEC. 8. DISPOSITION OF RECORDS.

Upon dissolution of the task force, the records of the task force shall become records of any committee designated by the Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MATSUI) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this legislation and include extraneous material thereon.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 599 will establish a House Task Force on Ocean Policy with the express purpose of developing recommendations and reporting to the House on the findings of the United States Commission on Ocean Policy by June 2006.

This bipartisan task force will have members appointed by the Speaker and Minority Leader who will focus on the final report of the United States Commission on Ocean Policy entitled, "An Ocean Blueprint for the 21st Century."

While the task force will have no legislative jurisdiction, it will put in place a mechanism to allow the House to look broadly at the question of caring for our oceans.

The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. GILCHREST) is to be commended for his untiring commitment to the preservation of our ocean resources. We are able to bring this resolution forward today because of his good work and interest on this subject.

It is important that this resolution be considered quickly, so that Members may be appointed to the task force and can begin their work and produce a report by June 2006.

Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. GILCHREST) and ask unanimous consent that he be allowed to control the time that I have.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. GILCHREST. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Mr. HASTINGS for helping bring this legislation to the floor, and I want to thank him for yielding the time. I will speak now for a few minutes explaining the legislation, and I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that we can have a bipartisan vote to move this task force along so that the myriad of issues that cover a broad range of committee assignments, both on the House and the Senate side, and a broad array of Federal departments and agencies can be viewed with a single entity, this task force, between now and June to understand the comprehensive magnificent work of the people under Admiral Watkins that put together this commission report.

The members on the commission are people who have represented and continue to represent the oceans, aquariums around the country, the port authorities, coastal studies, offshore oil drilling, the U.S. Navy, shipping and marine transportation, ocean ecology and fisheries, environmental interests and the banking industry, a broad array of individuals that were appointed by the President, the House and the Senate.

The scientists that represent the Ocean Commission Report that worked to develop the recommended policies are scientists from universities all across the country. Their expertise and diverse fields are in marine economics, coastal and estuarine issues, atmospheric issues, Gulf of Mexico issues and the whole array of problems with hurricanes, fishery science, coastal development, physics of ocean currents, oceanography. The list goes on and on and on.

They presented this report to the U.S. Congress in September of 2004. In this report, there are 31 chapters. Seven of the 31 chapters come under the jurisdiction of the Fisheries and Oceans Subcommittee on Resources. Seven of the 31 chapters come under my jurisdiction in this Ocean Subcommittee. We have held hearings on our part of the Ocean Commission Report. But 24 chapters lie outside the jurisdiction of that Fisheries Subcommittee. And it is important to get this task force so that all those other committees in this House can view this commission task force from the specific recommendations that the task force will assume from the ocean commission report.

What I would like to do is explain to my colleagues, the ocean commission task force makes recommendations in the following areas, which are outside the jurisdiction of the Ocean Subcommittee. Those are: The Congress should establish for better leadership and coordination a national ocean council and a non-Federal ocean council of advisors to view the full range of issues in the departments, the agencies

and the executive branch and what goes on in the States and the tribes and the international arena regarding oceans.

They make recommendations to improve NOAA, EPA, the Corps of Engineers, the Department of Interior, USDA and the States in their regional coordination. Right now it is severely fragmented. They make recommendations to clarify offshore responsibilities as far as leasing oil and gas, aquaculture, bioprospecting, wind energy, fisheries, just to name a few. They recommend structural changes in NASA, the Corps of Engineers, the Coast Guard, the U.S. Navy, the National Science Foundation, Aquaculture, Health and Human Services, Department of Justice, Department of State, Department of Labor, Department of Transportation and the United States Agency for International Development. Can all of this be done with one subcommittee or fragmented throughout the course of this Congress? Promote lifelong ocean education, ocean stewardship, science literacy, future ocean leaders, helping to bridge the gap between scientists and educators, a need for qualified ocean science in the classroom, bringing the ocean to the vast array of students across this country. This is the Committee on Education.

Better financial technical institutional support for watershed management initiatives through existing Federal and State laws linking coastal and offshore ecosystems. Better financial technical institutional support for all these issues. Something that is dear to our hearts right now as a result of this past hurricane season, several chapters dealing with guarding people and property against national hazards such as hurricanes and floods. And a year ago, a year and a half ago, in the commission report they predicted, right down to the letter, what could and eventually did happen to New Orleans, to coastal Louisiana, to Mississippi. A vast array of information.

Managing sediment flows: 30 States contribute sediment in the Mississippi River that eventually goes through Louisiana, Mississippi and the Gulf of Mexico.

□ 1630

How do we manage those sediment flows?

Techniques for cost benefit analysis is in this report. Marine commerce and transportation across the oceans, the estuaries, and the rivers in this country. Addressing coastal and water pollution, three major laws, statutes. The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System, Total Maximum Daily Load Program, Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund, those are outside the jurisdiction of resources entirely. Their recommendations are for dealing with wastewater treatment plants, septic tanks, industrial facilities, agriculture, urban and suburban runoff.

Addressing the atmospheric deposition problem: the single biggest issue

with many estuaries including San Francisco and the Chesapeake Bay is air deposition. Thirty percent of the problem with degrading the Chesapeake Bay is air deposition.

Watershed monitoring: in 1974 we had 500 stations across the country that monitored the quality of water. Today there are 32, from 500 down to 32. The lack of coordination between the State, the Federal Government, and the institutions is appalling.

Limiting vessel pollution and improving vessel safety: that is the EPA, the Coast Guard, and the International Maritime Association. How to deal with invasive species with ballast water, marine organisms, major problems in the Great Lakes, the Mississippi River, and many estuaries around the country.

Connecting the oceans and human health: biomedical research, marine bacteria, contaminated seafood, harmful alga blooms, recommendations that can be gleaned from a single perspective with a single entity such as this task force and then legislative recommendations to the myriad committees that deal with these issues.

Creating a national strategy for increasing scientific knowledge in ocean science, technology, and understanding the oceans' ecosystem.

Collaborating with the international community and funding recommendations for how long this is going to work.

The Ocean Subcommittee under the Resources Committee does not have the time or the resources or the people or the jurisdiction to do this. We have dealt in that ocean subcommittee with our jurisdiction regarding the Ocean Commission Report, which is marine debris, fisheries management, marine mammals, coral reefs, agriculture, ocean observing system, coastal habitats, and so on.

This report by Admiral Watkins and many scientists around this country deserve to have the United States Congress, this institution, take a comprehensive view of this report, study it for several months, and then make legislative recommendations to this body.

I urge my colleagues to vote for the task force.

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

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

(Ms. MATSUI asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, strange things happen around this place when we are getting ready for recess. Legislation just seems to come out of the woodwork sometimes, like the resolution on the Suspension Calendar today.

The bill before us today would spend \$400,000 of taxpayer money to establish a House Task Force on Ocean Policy. Quite simply, it is duplicative and wasteful. There is already a standing House committee to deal with ocean policy that professional staff already have in place.

The Rules Committee has not met to consider this resolution. In fact, no action, at least none that I am aware of, has been taken beyond the simple introduction of this measure. This resolution just appeared on the schedule at the last minute with no explanation, no details, and no reason for its urgency.

So I am a bit puzzled about why this task force is needed at all. Generally, task forces are created when there is an issue that crosses the jurisdictional lines of several different committees, all of whom claim primary jurisdiction. In that circumstance, there may well be a need to coordinate efforts in an efficient manner. However, in this case, the primary issues fall within the jurisdiction of the Resources Committee. In fact, there is a Subcommittee on Fisheries and Oceans chaired by the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. GILCHREST). That is where this issue belongs.

Let me be clear: our Nation's ocean policy is a worthy project, but I believe that this issue should be taken up by the Resources Committee. That is where the expertise is.

I hope that the resolution's sponsors and other Members speaking here today will shed some light on the need to move so quickly on this measure.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the remainder of my time be controlled by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE).

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TERRY). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from California for yielding me this time, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in 2003 the Pew Ocean Policy Commission put out a comprehensive report telling us that our oceans were in serious trouble. The Republican leadership quickly ignored the report, saying they wanted to wait for the results of the congressionally appointed U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy. And lo and behold, last September that commission came to the same basic conclusion: that our oceans are in peril from degraded waters, compromised resources, and conflicts between man and nature, and that immediate action is needed. They laid out some pretty pointed recommendations for Congress, and I would like to show this book, which is their recommendations. Over 500 pages at a cost of \$10 million. It took them 3 years. They did a comprehensive report at a cost of \$10 million.

Well over a year has gone by and still the House Republican leadership has sat on its hands and done virtually nothing for our oceans. At the end of 2004, the Fisheries and Oceans Subcommittee, on which I am the ranking member, held exactly one hearing on the U.S. Ocean Commission's recommendation. This year our sub-

committee and the full Resources Committee have done nothing to comprehensively consider or address the commission's recommendations despite my repeated requests.

What we have done instead is to hold a random assortment of hearings on a few areas that are mentioned in the commission's report, but without getting into any of the commission's recommendations. We seem to be highlighting the status quo rather than using the commission's recommendations to move forward.

Now, today in the face of the Republicans' consistent refusal to comprehensively address ocean issues, we are now handed the emptiest of promises that this oceans task force would mean real progress in dealing with the commission's recommendations. We are not going to fall for that, Mr. Speaker. Democrats are going to oppose this task force because it does nothing. Its task will literally be to write a report on a report that itself is already quite prescriptive in its instructions to Congress.

We don't need to study what is wrong with the oceans. We don't need more reports. What we need now is action, real action, not this task force.

I would point out that the resolution says we are going to spend \$400,000, that is on top of the \$10 million that the U.S. Oceans Commission has already spent. That is taxpayer dollars. That does not count the Pew Commission. That, I think, was mostly private funds. And this is at a time when I keep hearing from the House Republican leadership about how we do not have any money and we have to cut expenses and we do not want to waste our money. Well, why are we wasting another \$400,000 in taxpayers' money on a task force that does not even have any legislative responsibility?

I listened to Mr. HASTINGS, who sponsored this resolution. He said that there is no legislative jurisdiction in this task force. And I have heard my colleague, whom I respect greatly, the gentleman from Maryland. He is my chairman and I respect him greatly, but he goes on to say that there are so many committees that have jurisdiction over this that we don't have the time to deal with it.

Let me tell you, the House Republican leadership has no problem even ignoring committees and writing a lot of legislation in the Rules Committee when they want to get something done. I respect my colleague, but don't tell me that this Republican leadership needs another task force to write a bill, because I have seen bills written in the Rules Committee and come to the floor directly without even going to committee. I just don't buy it.

The truth is the real obstructionists are the Republican leaders and the Republicans on the Resources Committee, not all, but most, who have refused to allow a comprehensive consideration of major ocean issues this entire year.

And I mean not just haphazard hearings, but actually doing something that is meaningful.

The majority proposes to ignore this issue for another 6 months by creating a task force that has no legislative authority and comes with no guarantee that we will be any closer to serious action than before we started.

I want to say that my Democratic colleagues have specific recommendations that they have put in legislative form, and some of them are here on the floor. The gentleman from California (Mr. FARR) has put together the Oceans 21 bill that has most of the government's issues that come out of the U.S. Commission report.

He is a cochair of the Oceans Caucus. The gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN) has put forward the Fishing Quota Standards Acts, again adopting a lot of these recommendations. We also have the reauthorization of the Coastal Zone Management Act.

Democrats have been out there with legislation that we would like to move through committee that adopt the recommendations of the U.S. Oceans Commission's report. We have alternatives. We do not need another task force.

And I would point out over and over again I am getting very frustrated, and it may be obvious, with the fact that there is no action on the Republican side. The oceans are a tremendous resource for this Nation. The fishermen, the beach-goers, the coastal business owners in my district, they know this. They expect us to be working on problems facing our oceans. They would be quite disappointed to hear that the House leadership continues to ignore these problems and instead is choosing to avoid real action by studying this problem for another year.

Again, the Pew Commission, U.S. Oceans Commission, they have sounded an alarm; and it is time to do something to save our oceans and what is in our oceans. Let us reject this unnecessary task force and get down to some real work.

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

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

I would just like to respond to my colleague on the other side of the aisle. This issue did not pop up out of thin air. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle know full well that we have been working on this. We have had numerous, numerous conversations since last May on this particular task force. Leon Panetta, who headed the Pew Ocean Policy Commission's report, is in favor of this task force. Admiral Watkins, who worked on the Oceans Commission's report, is in favor of this task force. As a matter of fact, both of those men, Leon Panetta and Admiral Watkins, are urging my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote in favor of this.

Now, as far as my subcommittee that Mr. PALLONE serves on dealing with

these issues, this is a commission report that did cost a few million dollars, and it is worthy of our close scrutiny, not having staff make up a bill that we do not know the substance of that bill. This commission report is worthy of our attention, of our observation, of our analysis, of our critical understanding of it.

My subcommittee has been dealing with the issues that have come under our jurisdiction. We are working on the marine mammal recommendations, marine debris recommendations, coral reef recommendations, Magnuson Act recommendations. We are doing that and passing that through the subcommittee. But 24 chapters are outside those issues. They deal with the Science Committee, the Transportation Committee, the Agriculture Committee, the International Relations Committee, the Education Committee, the Financial Services Committee. We think, instead of fragmenting this all over again because 30 and 40 years ago we went through this with the Stratton report and there was not any single entity in the House of Representatives that took a critical and analytical view of the Stratton report, we want to do that now. Now is the time to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON).

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the resolution to create a House Ocean Task Force.

During the more than 20 years I have been here in the Congress, I have made it a priority to promote protection of our oceans and effective conservation and management of the living marine resources. From protecting coastal wetlands to cleaning up our estuaries to promoting sustainable fisheries to preventing ocean pollution, each has been a priority.

We have accomplished a great deal. But as highlighted in the more than 200 recommendations contained in the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy report released last year, much remains to be done. And as Mr. GILCHREST just pointed out, a bipartisan group to coordinate this activity is necessary, given the fragmentation that has existed in the committee system as it relates to ocean issues for more than 50 years.

As a chief sponsor in the House of the legislation to establish the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, I feel it is important to follow through and ensure the recommendations are effectively implemented.

□ 1645

We need to build on the momentum generated last year by the release of both the U.S. and the Pew Ocean Policy Commission reports and accomplish a true sea change in the way we utilize and manage our ocean resources. Given the scope and sheer

number of recommendations from both commissions, it is also clear that we need to prioritize our efforts.

The U.S. commission recommendations to Congress include a range of issues that cannot be addressed by any single committee. This task force will develop a number of recommendations that will be forwarded to the relevant standing committees and work with those committees to see that the recommendations are implemented.

I feel it is time that we recognize that in order to make progress, we need a coordinated Congressional focus incorporating policy justifications of each of the standing committees to draft a comprehensive national oceans policy. This task force will enable us to do that, and I might say that the Republican leadership and I hope the Democrat leadership is committed to help in this effort in a very direct way.

It took more than 10 years to implement the recommendations of the Stratton Commission. We cannot wait 10 years. The first U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy was an important one, but 10 years is just too long to wait. We need to work together to ensure implementation does not take that long this time.

We need to capitalize on the enthusiasm and momentum generated by the commission reports and their recommendations. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this House Ocean Task Force resolution so that we will better be able to deal with ocean issues.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR).

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I want to put this debate in some perspective. It was a year ago this week that the commission that the United States Congress created gave their report to us, after spending approximately \$10 million of the taxpayers' money to put the report together, a year ago. This debate is about how we spend another year before we do anything, and that is wrong.

What is lacking here is leadership. The ocean issue goes back generations. It goes back to the last administration. President Clinton had the first White House Conference on the Oceans out in California in 1997. That was where all the ideas were created that we needed to upgrade all the oceans. President Bush signed into law and appointed members of the committee which gave us this report.

What is happening is that this task force that is before the House today is just a way of delaying, stalling and not getting anything done. Everybody that is speaking here today loves the oceans. Everybody is a supporter of it, and there is not a greater supporter than Mr. GILCHREST. But, unfortunately, there is a lack of leadership behind Mr. GILCHREST.

Where, Mr. Speaker, is the leadership? There is a bill in his committee, it has been there for almost a year, and

they say, We need more time. That bill was put together with a coalition of Democrats and Republicans and Sea Grant Fellows, the staff, the Ph.D.'s and MAs to come here and work together. They are on it a year with Members and other staff.

There has been all the work done, and it has been put in a bill. It is a bipartisan bill. It has all the cosponsors of the Oceans Caucus, three Democrats and three Republicans. That bill is H.R. 2139 and the leader of that bill is Mr. WELDON from the Republican Party. We have not even been able to have a hearing, not even scheduled a hearing. That bill could pass, and it is the ocean policy. It is the sum total of the parts of those two commissions. We do not need to spend more taxpayer money and more time in our House trying to decide what to do; we just need to do it.

Now, we created a commission after 9/11, and after the recommendations came back, yes, there was debate on it, but in the same year we adopted it, and we took the recommendations. This is not being done.

Mr. GILCHREST is not getting the support. What they are giving him is a bone and saying, Here, go out and use the bureaucracy of the House to have another task force. I ask, what date are we going to have a hearing for our bill? If we want to have some leadership on this, can you give us a date when the Oceans-21 bill will be heard in your committee?

Mr. GILCHREST. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. FARR. I yield to the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. GILCHREST. I will tell you this, Mr. FARR: The aspects of Oceans-21 in your bill that is subject to the jurisdiction—

Mr. FARR. I just want to know the date. What month? January?

Mr. GILCHREST. The parts of your bill that comes under my jurisdiction—

Mr. FARR. Can we have a hearing on it?

Mr. GILCHREST. We have held hearings on those issues. We have. And we have developed from your bill legislation that is moving through the subcommittee, that many of them have already passed the subcommittee and the full committee and are awaiting floor action.

Mr. FARR. I have not seen any of that, and I am one of the cosponsors of that bill.

The Oceans Blueprint for the 21st Century is the report that we spent \$10 million on. The bill to implement that is called Oceans-21. This task force, the caucus, have all been bipartisan, have been equally split. But if you want to look at it, this task force is not only a delay tactic, it is also a very partisan tactic. The task force, for no apparent reason, will have seven Republican members and only five Democratic members. This is the first time in any of the debates we have not been an equal number in leadership and work.

This is a cynical attempt to just delay, to stall. Although you have quoted Mr. Panetta and Admiral Watkins, I know they want more than anything legislation to pass, not creation of another task force.

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like to read the first paragraph, because there has been a lot of mention around here about delay and the cost of the ocean commission report. I want to read the first paragraph of the ocean commission report: America's oceans and coasts are priceless assets, indispensable to life itself. They also contribute significantly to our prosperity and overall quality of life. Too often, however, we take these gifts for granted, underestimating their value and ignoring our impact on them. Then our use of the oceans becomes abuse and the productive capacity of our marine resources is diminished.

In 6 months, June 30, this bipartisan task force, made up as a reflection of the ratio of Democrats and Republicans in the House, which is standard practice for all committees, will issue its comprehensive report, legislative recommendations, so that each one of the fragmented committees will not have to deal with these issues that they have very little expertise with in any way.

This is a bipartisan task force that is funded with its own staff separate from any other committee or influences from any other committee to deal with the issue of oceans, which determine the climate, determine the weather, determine the air we breathe, the food source for billions of people. This is an issue that we can get together on, have a bipartisan working relationship and put aside our partisan bickering, because the oceans are priceless. We have some work to do, and we can accomplish that by June 30.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER).

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this resolution for many of the reasons that my colleagues have cited.

The fact of the matter is, we have the blueprint for what needs to be done on the oceans. \$10 million was spent developing it. We have another one from the private sector, from the Pew Foundation, led by our former colleague Leon Panetta. I think they spent over \$4 million. The Resources Committee has a budget of \$14 million. If there are five other committees, most of their budgets are larger than ours, so you are approaching almost \$100 million in public moneys that are available to deal with this issue. And yet we are going to create a task force to study a study and spend another \$400,000. Either the place is so terribly bureaucratized that it

cannot respond or it does not want to respond.

The fact of the matter is, we can do this through a select committee and end up with a legislative product, or we can do this through a task force and end up with a study of a study recommending to the committees, that have not shown any interest to date, that they should do something about the oceans.

You are right, the oceans are far too important to be left to that mechanism. But the fact of the matter is, this task force does not take this any further down the road.

This is about action. As Mr. FARR said, it is about leadership. We have the expertise in the committees. When we did the energy bill, the Speaker told us that the energy bill would be on the floor by a certain date. The Commerce Committee did their part, the Ways and Means Committee did their part. Transportation did their part. Resources did their part. We saw the bill on Monday. We talked about it on Wednesday, voted on it on Friday. It was on the floor the following week. Not a great process, but they obviously wanted to do something to have an energy bill on the floor.

We have done that in other cases. Here they simply do not want to do it. They really just do not want to do this to protect the oceans, because it requires a commitment of resources. It requires a national commitment to protect the oceans, and the Republican Congress is not interested in doing that. If they wanted to do it, they would do it. They simply do not want to do it.

But what they want to do now is just throw some additional money at it to kind of kick the can down the road. The emotions are too important to be kicked down the road. This should be addressed by this Congress. We have had a year, and nothing has happened. So now we are going to spend another 6 months and the ball is not going to get advanced very far, other than politically, and then we are going to be back telling the committees they should do something about the oceans. We just spent \$15 million telling the committees they should do something about the oceans.

So this is about whether you have the will to do something about the oceans, whether you have the political ability to do something about the oceans and the leadership to do something about the oceans, or you do not. It just does not make any sense.

This system, I guess, should become more flexible to deal with, because almost all of the tasks now that the Congress deals with cut across committee jurisdiction lines. So we ought to become more flexible to deal with it. We should not just be throwing more money at it to pretend like we are doing something to advance this incredibly important, incredibly urgent oceans agenda. This task force does not deal with that. I urge my colleagues to vote against this.

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

Mr. Speaker, as one point of clarification regarding the claim made by the gentleman, our chairman, that no select committee was formed to consider the Stratton Commission recommendations, I believe that the gentleman from Maryland was in fact wrong on that. The Senate specifically established a National Ocean Policy Study in the Commerce Committee for that purpose.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY).

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, as the saying goes, it is time for a lot less talk and a lot more action. The other side of the aisle talks a good game on protecting our oceans, but they control the Resources Committee. They control the House floor schedule. They control this Congress. And what have they done? At any time, they can use the House Resources Committee to bring up legislation to protect the oceans, but they have yet to have hearings or move legislation on marine protected areas, regional governance or coastal management. Instead, they have continually tried to open up our coasts to offshore drilling.

I have introduced H.R. 1712 to protect the coast of Sonoma County, California, as part of the National Marine Sanctuary Program, but there have been no hearings on this bill or any other bill to protect our oceans. Let us be clear with the American people: This task force that this bill creates will have no ability to truly affect policy.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that instead of talking a good game, that they start bringing up bills, such as H.R. 1712, that would truly protect our oceans.

Mr. GILCHREST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON).

□ 1700

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to point out to my friends on the other side of the aisle that Mr. GILCHREST has spent a great deal of time in working with leadership on this issue, recognizing that there is a process problem here in that the Oceans-21 bill that we all want to see passed is in the jurisdiction of quite some number of committees.

For example, the Agriculture Committee has jurisdiction with regard to issues involving runoff. The Armed Services Committee has obvious jurisdiction over issues involving the Navy. The Transportation Committee is where the Coast Guard subcommittee is housed. The Resources Committee, obviously made up of Interior members I might add, has great jurisdiction here, as does the Financial Services Committee and the Education Committee.

What Mr. GILCHREST is attempting to do here, and I support his effort very much, is to have a bipartisan commission made up that can work with leadership to work it through this morass, this maze of standing committees. If we do not do that, the sure bet is that this bill in this term is going nowhere.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, again, I think it is very important that we vote no on this resolution. Essentially, it is going to accomplish nothing. I said before that, when Mr. HASTINGS, who is the sponsor, first spoke earlier today, he said that the task force will have no legislative jurisdiction. If you read section 3, Jurisdiction, under the resolution, it specifically says: The task force may develop recommendations and report to the House on the final report of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy making recommendations for a national oceans policy entitled, *An Ocean Blueprint For the 21st Century*.

So, again, it says in the resolution, this is nothing but a report on another report which is already 500 pages, and \$10 million of taxpayers' money has been spent on it. Why should we spend another \$400,000 to come up with another report on the report with no legislative action? My democratic colleague Mr. FARR says he has a bill, Oceans-21. He is the co-chair of the Oceans Caucus, bipartisan legislation. He asked the gentleman from Maryland, when is there going to be a hearing on that? No answer. When is it going to be reported out? No answer. Why? Because this Republican Congress does not want to take any action on the ocean commission's recommendations. They just want to do another study, another report, another 6-month delay, another \$400,000, \$500,000 spent. It is ridiculous. We had the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) she said, why isn't her bill being reported?

Now, I know my colleague from Maryland said, Well, we can't do this because this goes across so many committees' jurisdictions. That is really not a legitimate argument.

The bottom line is that this House Republican leadership has taken bills, as I said many times, written them in the Rules Committee. The notion that they cannot get their act together and report out some of these bills, it just does not make any sense. I think that what we are seeing here is a delaying tactic. If you think about it, once this gets started, another 6 months, we will be halfway into the last year of this Congress, and we will basically see absolutely nothing happen. The only way that we are going to see action on the Ocean Commission's recommendations, the only way that we are going to see anything happen here is if we eliminate this task force and we demand and build pressure on the Republican leadership to report out legislation that has already been introduced that would enact the U.S. ocean commission's re-

port. That is the main reason I believe why we must vote no on this legislation. It will accomplish nothing. It is simply another delay.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GILCHREST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, this task force creates an opportunity to bypass, eliminate the bureaucracy and fragmentation of the myriad of jurisdictions of this body. This task force creates a new dynamic. It brings people in, Democrats, Republicans. It brings the public into the process. It brings scientists into the process. It brings people who work in all the various marine industries into the process to evaluate, to analyze in a very clinical manner the ocean commission recommendations.

This is about specific recommendations coming out of a bipartisan task force with the idea that we eliminate bureaucracy; we eliminate the committee jurisdiction problems and hand to these various committees the specific recommendations that we have evaluated over this 6-month period of time.

The subcommittee is moving legislation with the recommendations from the ocean commission report and the Pew Commission report on oceans. We are dealing with what to do about sanctuaries, marine protected areas, coral reefs, marine debris, Magnuson issues, ecosystem management of the fisheries. All of these things subject to our jurisdiction and the rules of the House are being moved through that subcommittee. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of the task force.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my opposition to this resolution.

This Ocean Policy Task Force resolution, while well intentioned by its sponsor, is misguided. Its effect would be to deceive the American public into believing that the House of Representatives is actually working to advance the recommendations of two comprehensive ocean policy reports when the opposite is true.

As the Ranking Democratic Member on the Committee on Resources, I staunchly support efforts to restore our ocean and coastal environment. But what we have before us today smells fishy and I urge Members to oppose this ill-advised resolution.

Last September, the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy sent up to the Congress a comprehensive report that included over two-hundred specific recommendations to guide the development of a new national ocean policy for the 21st Century.

That report—the first of its kind in over thirty years—handed the Congress an action agenda to finally address the degraded condition of our ocean and coastal resources. The Commission was filled with highly credentialed professionals with expertise in policy, economics, science, technology and resource management drawn from both the public and private sectors and academia.

No one, absolutely no one, questions the caliber of the Commission. For the Congress to assert that it can do a better job in six months time than the experts appointed to the Commission did in three years is absurd.

Moreover, the Ocean Commission's report echoed similar findings and recommendations to those made in the 2003 report released by the independent Pew Oceans Commission, chaired by our former colleague, the Honorable Leon Panetta.

If there was anything that these reports conveyed, it is that this is a pressing national problem.

Unfortunately, rather than rolling up our sleeves and working in a bi-partisan fashion to begin a process of genuine oversight to evaluate the merits of the Ocean Commission's work, months have been allowed to lapse with little, if any, meaningful oversight; without the development of any joint strategy; and absent any leadership by the Republican majority.

I, along with Members from both sides of the aisle, have introduced legislation to implement several of the Commission's recommendations. My legislation, for example, addresses fisheries management, including how the various fisheries management councils can perform in a more transparent and effective manner.

But instead of debating these substantive proposals, the majority leadership trots out a resolution to create a toothless Task Force on Ocean Policy which will only waste precious time.

This is a classic stalling tactic of government—to study an issue to death. Sadly, our oceans could be on life support before this Republican-led Congress acts to implement the Commission's recommendations.

I urge members to support true oversight of the Ocean Commission's recommendations and to oppose this misguided resolution.

Mr. GILCREST. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TERRY). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. GILCREST) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 599.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

COAST GUARD HURRICANE RELIEF ACT OF 2005

Mr. LOBIONDO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4508) to commend the outstanding efforts in response to Hurricane Katrina by members and employees of the Coast Guard, to provide temporary relief to certain persons affected by such hurricane with respect to certain laws administered by the Coast Guard, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4508

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Coast Guard Hurricane Relief Act of 2005".

SEC. 2. COMMENDATION, RECOGNITION, AND THANKS FOR COAST GUARD PERSONNEL.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds the following:

(1) On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf of Mexico coastal region of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, causing the worst natural disaster in United States history.

(2) The Coast Guard strategically positioned its aircraft, vessels, and personnel the day before Hurricane Katrina made landfall and launched search and rescue teams within hours after Hurricane Katrina struck.

(3) The Coast Guard moved its operations in areas threatened by Hurricane Katrina to higher ground and mobilized cutters, small boats, and aircraft from all around the United States to help in the response to Hurricane Katrina.

(4) The response to Hurricane Katrina by members and employees of the Coast Guard has been immediate, invaluable, and courageous.

(5) The Coast Guard rescued more than 33,000 people affected by Hurricane Katrina through the air and by water, including evacuations of hospitals, and has been at the center of efforts to restore commerce to areas affected by Hurricane Katrina by clearing shipping channels, replacing aids to navigation, and securing uprooted oil rigs.

(6) The Coast Guard was at the forefront of the Federal response to the numerous oil and chemical spills in the area affected by Hurricane Katrina.

(7) Members and employees of the Coast Guard—

(A) have shown great leadership in helping to coordinate relief efforts with respect to Hurricane Katrina;

(B) have used their expertise and specialized skills to provide immediate assistance to victims and survivors of the hurricane; and

(C) have set up remote assistance operations in the affected areas in order to best provide service to the Gulf of Mexico coastal region.

(8) Members and employees of the Coast Guard have worked together to bring clean water, food, and resources to victims and survivors in need.

(b) COMMENDATION, RECOGNITION, AND THANKS.—The Congress—

(1) commends the outstanding efforts in response to Hurricane Katrina by members and employees of the Coast Guard;

(2) recognizes that the actions of these individuals went above and beyond the call of duty; and

(3) thanks them for their continued dedication and service.

(c) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Coast Guard should play a major role in response to any future national emergency or disaster caused by a natural event in the United States in a coastal or offshore area.

SEC. 3. TEMPORARY AUTHORIZATION TO EXTEND THE DURATION OF LICENSES, CERTIFICATES OF REGISTRY, AND MERCHANT MARINERS' DOCUMENTS.

(a) LICENSES AND CERTIFICATES OF REGISTRY.—Notwithstanding section 7106 and 7107 of title 46, United States Code, the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating may temporarily extend the duration of a license or certificate of registry issued for an individual under chapter 71 of that title until not later than February 28, 2006, if—

(1) the individual is a resident of Alabama, Mississippi, or Louisiana; or

(2) the individual is a resident of any other State, and the records of the individual—

(A) are located at the Coast Guard facility in New Orleans that was damaged by Hurricane Katrina; or

(B) were damaged or lost as a result of Hurricane Katrina.

(b) MERCHANT MARINERS' DOCUMENTS.—Notwithstanding section 7302(g) of title 46, United States Code, the Secretary of the Department in which the Coast Guard is operating may temporarily extend the duration of a merchant mariners' document issued for an individual under chapter 73 of that title until not later than February 28, 2006, if—

(1) the individual is a resident of Alabama, Mississippi, or Louisiana; or

(2) the individual is a resident of any other State, and the records of the individual—

(A) are located at the Coast Guard facility in New Orleans that was damaged by Hurricane Katrina; or

(B) were damaged or lost as a result of Hurricane Katrina.

(c) MANNER OF EXTENSION.—Any extensions granted under this section may be granted to individual seamen or a specifically identified group of seamen.

SEC. 4. TEMPORARY AUTHORIZATION TO EXTEND THE DURATION OF VESSEL CERTIFICATES OF INSPECTION.

(a) AUTHORITY TO EXTEND.—Notwithstanding section 3307 and 3711(b) of title 46, United States Code, the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating may temporarily extend the duration or the validity of a certificate of inspection or a certificate of compliance issued under chapter 33 or 37, respectively, of title 46, United States Code, for up to 3 months for a vessel inspected by a Coast Guard Marine Safety Office located in Alabama, Mississippi, or Louisiana.

(b) EXPIRATION OF AUTHORITY.—The authority provided under this section expires February 28, 2006.

SEC. 5. PRESERVATION OF LEAVE LOST DUE TO HURRICANE KATRINA OPERATIONS.

(a) PRESERVATION OF LEAVE.—Notwithstanding section 701(b) of title 10, United States Code, any member of the Coast Guard who serves on active duty for a continuous period of 30 days, who is assigned to duty or otherwise detailed in support of units or operations in the Eighth Coast Guard District area of responsibility for activities to mitigate the consequences of, or assist in the recovery from, Hurricane Katrina, during the period beginning on August 28, 2005, and ending on January 1, 2006, and who would otherwise lose any accumulated leave in excess of 60 days as a consequence of such assignment, is authorized to retain an accumulated total of up to 90 days of leave.

(b) EXCESS LEAVE.—Leave in excess of 60 days accumulated under subsection (a) shall be lost unless used by the member before the commencement of the second fiscal year following the fiscal year in which the assignment commences, or in the case of a Reserve members, the year in which the period of active service is completed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LOBIONDO) and the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

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

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important bill to address the concerns of Coast Guardsmen and the merchant mariner community that