

McKeon	Regula	Smith (NJ)
McMorris	Rehberg	Smith (TX)
Rodgers	Reichert	Souder
Mica	Renzi	Stearns
Miller (FL)	Reynolds	Sullivan
Miller (MI)	Rogers (AL)	Tancredo
Moran (KS)	Rogers (KY)	Terry
Murphy, Tim	Rogers (MI)	Thornberry
Musgrave	Rohrabacher	Tiahrt
Myrick	Ros-Lehtinen	Tiberi
Neugebauer	Roskam	Turner
Nunes	Royce	Upton
Pearce	Ryan (WI)	Walberg
Pence	Sali	Walden (OR)
Peterson (PA)	Saxton	Walsh (NY)
Petri	Scalise	Wamp
Pickering	Schmidt	Weldon (FL)
Pitts	Sensenbrenner	Weller
Platts	Sessions	Westmoreland
Poe	Shadegg	Whitfield (KY)
Porter	Shays	Wilson (NM)
Price (GA)	Shimkus	Wilson (SC)
Pryce (OH)	Shuler	Wittman (VA)
Putnam	Shuster	Wolf
Radanovich	Simpson	Young (FL)
Ramstad	Smith (NE)	

NOT VOTING—18

Andrews	Heger	Paul
Boswell	Hunter	Ruppersberger
Cooper	Larson (CT)	Rush
Cubin	Loeb sack	Smith (WA)
Doolittle	Lucas	Tierney
Gilchrest	Miller, Gary	Young (AK)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised there are 2 minutes remaining in this vote.

□ 1320

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 510, if I were present I would have voted "yea." Unfortunately, I am getting a medical procedure done and cannot vote today.

DRILL RESPONSIBLY IN LEASED LANDS ACT OF 2008

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6515) to amend the Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act of 1976 to require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct an expeditious environmentally responsible program of competitive leasing of oil and gas in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6515

*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 "Drill Responsibly in Leased Lands Act of 2008".

SEC. 2. NATIONAL PETROLEUM RESERVE IN ALASKA: LEASE SALES.

Section 107(a) of the Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act of 1976 is amended to read as follows:

"(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall conduct an expeditious environmentally responsible program of competitive leasing of oil and gas in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska in accordance with this Act. Such program shall include no fewer than one lease sale in the Reserve each year during the period 2009 through 2013."

SEC. 3. NATIONAL PETROLEUM RESERVE IN ALASKA: PIPELINE CONSTRUCTION.

The Secretary of Transportation shall facilitate, in an environmentally responsible manner and in coordination with the Secretary of the Interior, the construction of pipelines necessary to transport oil and gas from or through the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska to existing transportation or processing infrastructure on the North Slope of Alaska.

SEC. 4. ALASKA NATURAL GAS PIPELINE PROJECT FACILITATION.

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

(1) Over 35 trillion cubic feet of natural gas reserves have been discovered on Federal and State lands currently open to oil and gas leasing on the North Slope of Alaska.

(2) These gas supplies could make a significant contribution to meeting the energy needs of the United States, but the lack of a natural gas transportation system has prevented these gas reserves from reaching markets in the lower 48 States.

(b) FACILITATION BY PRESIDENT.—The President shall, pursuant to the Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline Act (division C of Public Law 108-324; 15 U.S.C. 720 et seq.) and other applicable law, coordinate with producers of oil and natural gas on the North Slope of Alaska, Federal agencies, the State of Alaska, Canadian authorities, and other interested persons in order to facilitate construction of a natural gas pipeline from Alaska to United States markets as expeditiously as possible.

SEC. 5. PROJECT LABOR AGREEMENTS AND OTHER PIPELINE REQUIREMENTS.

(a) PROJECT LABOR AGREEMENTS.—The President, as a term and condition of any permit required under Federal law for the pipelines referred to in section 3 and section 4, and in recognizing the Government's interest in labor stability and in the ability of construction labor and management to meet the particular needs and conditions of such pipelines to be developed under such permits and the special concerns of the holders of such permits, shall require that the operators of such pipelines and their agents and contractors negotiate to obtain a project labor agreement for the employment of laborers and mechanics on production, maintenance, and construction for such pipelines.

(b) PIPELINE MAINTENANCE.—The Secretary of Transportation shall require every pipeline operator authorized to transport oil and gas produced under Federal oil and gas leases in Alaska through the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, any pipeline constructed pursuant to section 3 or 4 of this Act, or any other federally approved pipeline transporting oil and gas from the North Slope of Alaska, to certify to the Secretary of Transportation annually that such pipeline is being fully maintained and operated in an efficient manner. The Secretary of Transportation shall assess appropriate civil penalties for violations of this requirement in the same manner as civil penalties are assessed for violations under section 60122(a)(1) of title 49, United States Code.

SEC. 6. BAN ON EXPORT OF ALASKAN OIL.

(a) REPEAL OF PROVISION AUTHORIZING EXPORTS.—Section 28(s) of the Mineral Leasing Act (30 U.S.C. 185(s)) is repealed.

(b) REIMPOSITION OF PROHIBITION ON CRUDE OIL EXPORTS.—Upon the effective date of this Act, subsection (d) of section 7 of the Export Administration Act of 1979 (50 U.S.C. App. 2406(d)), shall be effective, and any other provision of that Act (including sections 11 and 12) shall be effective to the extent necessary to carry out such section 7(d), notwithstanding section 20 of that Act or any other provision of law that would other-

wise allow exports of oil to which such section 7(d) applies.

SEC. 7. ISSUANCE OF NEW LEASES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—After the date of the issuance of regulations under subsection (b), the Secretary of the Interior shall not issue to a person any new lease that authorizes the exploration for or production of oil or natural gas, under section 17 of the Mineral Leasing Act (33 U.S.C. 226), the Mineral Leasing Act for Acquired Lands Act (30 U.S.C. 351 et seq.), the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1331 et seq.), or any other law authorizing the issuance of oil and gas leases on Federal lands or submerged lands, unless—

(1) the person certifies for each existing lease under such Acts for the production of oil or gas with respect to which the person is a lessee, that the person is diligently developing the Federal lands that are subject to the lease in order to produce oil or natural gas or is producing oil or natural gas from such land; or

(2) the person has relinquished all ownership interest in all Federal oil and gas leases under which oil and gas is not being diligently developed.

(b) DILIGENT DEVELOPMENT.—The Secretary shall issue regulations within 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act that establish what constitutes "diligently developing" for purposes of this Act.

(c) FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH REQUIREMENTS.—Any person who fails to comply with the requirements of this section or any regulation or order issued to implement this section shall be liable for a civil penalty under section 109 of the Federal Oil and Gas Royalty Management Act of 1982 (30 U.S.C. 1719).

(d) LESSEE DEFINED.—In this section the term "lessee"—

(1) includes any person or other entity that controls, is controlled by, or is in or under common control with, a lessee; and

(2) does not include any person who does not hold more than a minority ownership interest in a lease under an Act referred to in subsection (a) authorizing the exploration for or production of oil or natural gas.

SEC. 8. FAIR RETURN ON PRODUCTION OF FEDERAL OIL AND GAS RESOURCES.

(a) ROYALTY PAYMENTS.—The Secretary of the Interior shall take all steps necessary to ensure that lessees under leases for exploration, development, and production of oil and natural gas on Federal lands, including leases under the Mineral Leasing Act (30 U.S.C. 181 et seq.), the Mineral Leasing Act for Acquired Lands (30 U.S.C. 351 et seq.), the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (30 U.S.C. 1331 et seq.), and all other mineral leasing laws, are making prompt, transparent, and accurate royalty payments under such leases.

(b) RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEGISLATIVE ACTION.—In order to facilitate implementation of subsection (a), the Secretary of the Interior shall, within 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act and in consultation with the affected States, prepare and transmit to Congress recommendations for legislative action to improve the accurate collection of Federal oil and gas royalties.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) and the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) will each control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that time for debate on the pending measure be expanded to 60 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) and the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) each will control 30 minutes.

There was no objection.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of our freshmen Democratic members and in concert with the Democratic leadership, I am pleased to bring to the floor today the Drill Responsibly in Leased Lands Act, the DRILL bill.

Let there be no mistake about it. As Democrats, we are pro drilling. I repeat that for my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. We are pro drilling. We are for drilling now. And we are for drilling in areas that bring near-term relief to the American public.

As others put forth bumper-sticker energy policies, today, House Democrats are bringing forth prudent legislation aimed at unleashing the vast potential of the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska, this section to the far right on the map behind me. That is to be distinguished very clearly and separately from the ANWR, over on my far left.

Where better to drill than in the National Petroleum Reserve? That is what it's for. The National Petroleum Reserve. That is why it was set aside. The National Petroleum Reserve.

Now, my colleagues, the National Petroleum Reserve, situated on the North Slope of Alaska—this reserve is no pipe dream like ANWR way over here, which is a bumper sticker approach to our energy woes—the National Petroleum Reserve is open for leasing. It has been. It will be. Twenty-three million acres. The National Petroleum Reserve is open for leasing, open for business, now, today, 23 million acres containing an estimated 6.6 billion barrels of recoverable oil. There is more than over here in ANWR, which is not even open for leasing at this point in time. It is a pipe dream over here in ANWR.

Far more than ANWR, the National Petroleum Reserve, as I said, has much more recoverable oil than ANWR. And if ANWR were fully open, we still would be 20 years before we could have any oil in production. The Energy Information estimates show that the only effect on the price at the pump would be 1.8 cents 20 years from now.

As opposed to that, we have the National Petroleum Reserve set aside for drilling. In Alaska, 35 trillion cubic feet of natural gas has been stranded. Think about that: 35 trillion cubic feet of natural gas stranded over in the National Petroleum Reserve because there is no pipeline available to bring

it to market over here being the major pipeline. For oil only, I might add.

Elsewhere, there are 68 million acres of land onshore and offshore in the Outer Continental Shelf in the lower 48 under oil and gas leases that are not producing. They may be subject to speculation. They may be purely being warehoused. We don't know.

I say here today, drill. Drill. Drill. Drill here in America. Drill now. Let's drill.

The DRILL Act, Drill Responsibly in Leased Lands Act, would unleash the vast potential of the National Petroleum Reserve by requiring annual Federal oil and gas lease sales and by facilitating the construction of pipelines to connect the NPR-A with the existing central North Slope arteries that will bring it on down to the American consumers in the lower 48. That includes Prudhoe Bay, connecting it over here to Prudhoe Bay, the transportation infrastructure and trans-Alaska Pipeline that comes down here, we do need still a gas pipeline. There is, of course, already existing an oil pipeline.

But it makes as a matter of Presidential priority, the DRILL Act makes the construction of the Alaska natural gas pipeline a priority so that stranded gas, that stranded gas in the National Petroleum Reserve, can be transported to the lower 48.

It requires project labor agreements be entered into for construction of these pipelines so they would be good-paying American jobs. It requires that the trans-Alaska Pipeline, the NPR pipeline that connects, that is right here, a 5-mile segment connecting NPR over to the existing oil and gas leasing being done in the Prudhoe Bay area, that they be maintained and operated in an efficient manner to ensure an uninterrupted flow of oil and natural gas. And the DRILL Act reinstates the ban of the exportation of Alaskan oil to other countries so that this Alaskan oil, American oil, can be used by Americans for their relief.

□ 1330

It is a commonsense approach to our near-term energy woes. We know very clearly we must transition ourselves from oil dependency. We must wean ourselves from oil addiction. Alternative fuels, coal-to-liquids, carbon sequestration, other noncorn-based alternatives, renewables, all of the above should be on the table. It is the only way to secure America's energy independence from foreign crude.

But in the near term, we need to drill. We are saying in this bill today drill, drill, drill. Drill it now. Drill it here. Drill it where the oil is and where it is already available, not wait 20 years from now, as the President proposes to lift some moratorium on the OCS and up here in the ANWR that, as I have already said, won't affect any near-term relief at the pump for American consumers.

Let me observe that there are those who display a fundamental misunder-

standing of parts of this legislation. We do of course incorporate the use it or lose it that has already been passed by a majority in this body which requires the diligent development of Federal oil and gas leases during their primary term, which is normally 10 years. What that means is during that period, we are requesting that the oil companies do something with these leases to explore for energy. If a discovery is made, and we hope that it will be, apply for the permit.

Now, I understand drilling. I think most of my colleagues know I am from the State of West Virginia, by golly, the great State of West Virginia. We know something about energy woes in that State. We are not a NIMBY State by any stretch of the imagination. We do not shirk from our responsibility to contribute to the Nation's need for energy. We have mining. We have drilling.

I understand that complications can take place while trying to develop a lease, environmental challenges, bureaucratic delays, but this constitutes due diligence. This constitutes the development of a lease. This constitutes moving toward meeting our energy woes. Diligent development does not mean the lease is producing, I understand that. It means that a company is doing something with the lease to determine whether it can be brought into production or not. That is a good thing. That is diligent development.

I understand it is a lengthy process, but I am saying to Mr. Big Oil, please do something on these leases. Do something. If you have to go out and buy a Black & Decker drill to drill it to move forward, do that.

Vote for this legislation. A vote for this legislation will mean that we are trying to bring energy immediately to the American people, that we are voting for American good-paying jobs, and that we are voting to prevent American energy from being exported to foreign markets.

As I conclude, I say, drill, drill, drill. Drill here. Drill now. Drill so we can meet our energy supply-side demands here with American resources.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this misguided, misdirected legislation. After seeing this bill defeated just 2 weeks ago, I quite honestly am surprised that we are back for one more attempt at it. It is really heartwarming to find my colleague from West Virginia, the chairman of my committee, saying "drill America now."

The only thing is I am wondering why the chairman did not allow us to have amendments that would allow us to drill now. If he would allow us the amendments that would stop the litigation that is stopping us from drilling now, maybe we could work through some of those 68 million acres, if he would allow us to have amendments

which would stop the regulatory process that is delaying unnecessarily and is of no benefit to the American consumer, maybe we could drill now. But I find the chairman's comments just hard to believe.

In the context of the discussion today, I would invite the chairman to sign on to a letter with me. The letter is from myself and several other Members asking just in one area, one area where we find bureaucratic delays, 7 years in Utah, the BLM has not issued the resource management plans that are required in order to develop just that.

If the chairman of the committee is intent on drill, drill, drill, as he says today, let him just put his one signature beside mine, and we will send it to NANCY PELOSI and send it to the President of the United States from NANCY PELOSI and us in the House and the Members of the Senate.

One place where we have some of that 68 million acres, 1 million of the 68 million acres, and let's just work one block at a time to figure out exactly what the roadblocks are because I believe, I believe in my heart that the majority does not want to drill today.

I believe that they understand that it is not the oil companies who lack the diligence, but it is instead roadblocks by people who have hijacked the energy policy of this country.

In my section of the debate we will talk about the reason the 68 million acres lie unused, and it will go from regulatory process to litigation. It will go into the problems of seismic that are being blocked up along the northern end of this country. We will talk about the delays one step at a time.

But let's talk just a little bit about the bill before us today. It is several sections.

The first section I want to talk about directs the sale of the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska, the NPR-A. Now that is curious that the Democrats on the floor of the House today do not want to open up ANWR, 2,000 acres. They have been concerned about the environmental degradation of the 2,000 acres of ANWR, and yet today they are saying that they are going to open up 23 million acres to environmental degradation. There is not one bit of infrastructure. There are no roads. There are no drilling pads. There are no pipelines. They are hundreds of miles away from where they need to be for the market. Yet with ANWR, with a 74-mile pipeline, it is sincerely believed that we could get production down to the continental United States within a year.

The Trans-Alaska Pipeline, 800 miles long, took 3 years to have it built and full of oil because this Congress, at that point in time, realized that they could make a difference and they did make a difference by saying that this pipeline is not going to be delayed by litigation.

If the gentleman from West Virginia says drill and drill now, then let him

make the equal commitment that we will not allow our production to be delayed by litigation which is going to come from every sort of environmental group, either in the NPR-A or ANWR or the Outer Continental Shelf.

It is really difficult to believe that the majority is sincere when they say drill today, and on the other side of the spectrum we see all sorts of delaying mechanisms from people who contribute money to them.

I was interested in the last debate to find that oil companies contribute money to Republicans and therefore there is some scheme. When I look at the bill in front of us today, I see groups, I see an alliance with groups that contribute a lot of money to Democrats. I see over \$670 million in the last several years from trial lawyers. There is new language in this bill which will be litigated probably for decades.

I see a section in this bill, section 5, that requires project labor agreements, and I see that the unions have given to the Democrats over \$1 billion.

And then I find the continuing language which says that there are going to be protections in place that satisfy environmental groups; and again, environmental groups have invested over \$1 billion in Democrat candidates.

So when I hear from the other side their observations about the special interests, I think we should look at the bill. Section 2 requires again the direction that any leases be environmentally responsible. That is new language.

Sections 3 and 4 deal with pipeline requirements that companies tell me that they have to currently comply with already, so it appears to be a duplication.

The project labor agreements are brand new. These are things where private companies are directed that they will, before they can work on any private project, have labor agreements in place.

Then we have a ban that is reinstated on exporting Alaskan oil. Keep in mind that it was Democrat President Bill Clinton that opened up the Alaskan oil to be exported. So again, we find now the flip-flop in that position on their part. The ban was originally in place, and President Clinton decided he would relieve that ban. And now we find it being put back in place.

The issuance of new leases, use it or lose it, frankly is already in place in law. There is language that currently states that if you do not use a lease, you lose it.

So either this bill is simply to try to convince the American people that we are doing something when we are actually not, or it is even worse than that. I believe that we have no purpose for this bill. I believe that this bill is not going to increase the amount of domestic energy one bit. I think that what it is going to do is to start anew, it is going to start new processes and are going to delay even by months the process in place for the NPR-A.

So while it is telling us we are going to drill now and drill in the NPR-A, actually it is doing the exact opposite. It is instituting new rules that will have to go through a completely new process.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the debate.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,  
Washington, DC, July 17, 2008.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,  
*Speaker, House of Representatives,*  
Washington, DC.  
Hon. STENY HOYER,  
*Majority Leader, House of Representatives,*  
Washington, DC.  
Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,  
*Minority Leader, House of Representatives,*  
Washington, DC.  
Hon. ROY BLUNT,  
*Minority Whip, House of Representatives,*  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER, MINORITY LEADER BOEHNER, MAJORITY LEADER HOYER, AND MINORITY WHIP BLUNT: In the last month, through various legislative proposals and public comments, Majority leaders in Congress have accused oil and gas companies of refusing to drill. We think many times idle acres are caused by factors beyond these companies' control. In many cases, Congress and the bureaucracy create roadblocks that shut down companies' access to the lands.

Your rhetoric over the last few months leads us to believe we have finally reached a consensus in Congress. In order to start drilling on idle acres where regulatory burdens exist, we request Congressional leaders act now to remove these obstacles on a case by case basis. We also request that you join us in sending a joint letter to the President urging him to issue an Executive Order systematically removing barriers on a case by case basis from lands under development that, due to regulatory burdens, remain blocked from development.

We suggest starting with the permanent delays and lawsuits preventing drilling in Utah. Please join us in sending a letter to the President asking that he open drilling in Utah by issuing the final Records of Decision (RODs) on this state's Resource Management Plans (RMPs)—Vernal, Price, Moab, Richfield, and Monticello—which authorize oil and gas activities in Utah. These plans were to have been underway for over 7 years. In our letter we will ask the President to order the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to issue the RMPs by August 31, 2008.

Additionally, we ask you insist that the RODs authorize the Preferred Alternatives in each RMP without the adoption of new Wilderness Characteristics Areas (WCAs). Removing bureaucratic roadblocks to these 955,000 idle acres will ensure that development starts immediately. This would enable the oil and gas industry to effectively tap into over 5.2 Tcf of natural gas and 334 million barrels of oil. This energy would heat 72.9 million homes and power 24.5 million cars.

Clearing the regulatory roadblocks in Utah is one simple step to lower the price of energy for the American people. It is only by acting in a bipartisan manner that we can move our nation out of this national energy crisis. We have prepared a letter and await your approval. Additionally, we stand ready to assist you in bringing legislation before the House of Representatives that will eliminate the roadblocks to energy development in America.

In coming together to encourage the President to take steps and reduce the regulatory burden on companies developing resources, we will show the American people that the

Federal government is serious about lowering the price of gasoline. If we support the President as he removes regulatory roadblocks, we will see increased development on the acres sitting idle and lower energy prices.

Sincerely,

STEVAN PEARCE,  
*Member of Congress.*  
ROB BISHOP,  
*Member of Congress.*  
CHRIS CANNON,  
*Member of Congress.*

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,  
Washington, DC, July 17, 2008.

Hon. GEORGE W. BUSH,  
*President, the White House,*  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: Congress has reached a consensus on opening idle lands to energy exploration and production. As we look en masse at these idle acres, we begin to see a pattern emerge. We believe companies producing on acres that remain idle are facing factors beyond their control. In many cases, Congress and the bureaucracy create roadblocks that shut down companies' access to the lands.

We ask that you look at each case individually and on a case by case basis for the purpose of systematically removing the regulatory roadblocks these companies' face on idle acres. We believe you should begin with one simple case in Utah. For seven years, Utah has waited for the final Records of Decision (RODs) on their state's Resource Management Plans (RMPs) at Vernal, Price, Moab, Richfield, and Monticello that authorize oil and gas activities in Utah.

We believe you should issue an Executive Order to require the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to issue the RMPs by August 31, 2008. Additionally, we ask that you order BLM to ensure the RODs authorize the Preferred Alternatives in each RMP without the adoption of new Wilderness Characteristics Areas (WCAs). Removing bureaucratic roadblocks to these 955,000 idle acres will ensure that development starts immediately. This would enable the oil and gas industry to effectively tap into over 5.2 Tcf of natural gas and 334 million barrels of oil. This energy would heat 72.9 million homes and power 24.5 million cars.

Clearing the regulatory roadblocks in Utah is one simple step to lower the price of energy for the American people. It is only by acting in a bipartisan manner that we can move our nation out of this national energy crisis. Additionally, we stand ready to assist you in bringing legislation before the House of Representatives that will eliminate the roadblocks to energy development in America.

Sincerely,

STEVAN PEARCE,  
*Member of Congress.*  
ROB BISHOP,  
*Member of Congress.*  
CHRIS CANNON,  
*Member of Congress.*

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RAHALL. I am shocked that the gentleman would even start down the road of campaign contributions in this debate, but I am not going to proceed any further down that road.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO).

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

In 1923, President Harding took the Saudi Arabia of the United States and put it into the Naval Petroleum Reserve. There is a huge pool of known

oil, over 10 billion barrels underneath what has now been called, and the Republicans changed it from the Naval Petroleum Reserve to the National Petroleum Reserve. And yes, indeed, President Clinton did let the first leases in that more than a decade ago.

The companies have drilled 25 test wells to find out there is indeed oil under there, but they have not connected over here to the Prudhoe Bay pipeline and there is no construction going on and no active drilling going on.

Now this area that they want to argue about, in 1950 it was made into a wildlife reserve. Now this was made into a Naval Petroleum Reserve because it has huge amounts of known oil. This was made into a wildlife reserve because it has huge amounts of known wildlife. President Harding didn't make ANWR into the Naval Petroleum Reserve because no one knows if there is any oil under there. They try to pretend that they know that there is oil there, but the Bush administration's own Mineral Management Service says there is a 50 percent chance of recoverable oil under ANWR.

So why not drill here in NPR-A? Why don't the Republicans and the oil companies want to fully exploit these 10 billion barrels of oil? I think there is a pretty simple answer to that, because they are doing really well under the Bush-Cheney energy policy. Remember, written in secret, voted on and put into law by the Republican Congress, signed by George Bush. During George Bush's tenure, the profits of the oil companies have been \$511 billion, a new record every year George Bush has been in office, more money in 7 years than in the preceding quarter-century.

This system is working quite well for them. They don't want to increase supply. In fact, they are working hand-in-glove with OPEC and others who are colluding to restrict supply.

Drill responsibly in leased land. Exploit America's resources.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON).

(Mr. BARTON of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 6515. The bill was introduced yesterday. It is on the floor today. That is pretty fast work. No hearings, no committee process. It is primarily a restatement of existing Federal law with a couple of exceptions. It does have a prohibition of any oil that is found in Alaska going anywhere but the lower 48. Chairman RAHALL and I had a little debate about that on the House floor earlier this week. I certainly don't have any opposition. It is somewhat meaningless because oil is fungible and it can go wherever it needs to go; but if that is the price we have to pay to get more oil drilled and produced in Alaska, I am actually for that section of the bill.

Having said that, this bill is counter-productive if we really want to find

new oil and gas because it doesn't open up any new areas.

□ 1345

If you only allow drilling where we have already been allowed to drill, for example, in the great State of Texas that I represent, we have drilled over 2 million oil wells since 1901. The probability of finding a major new oil field in Texas today is much closer to zero than it is to 100 percent, because we have already drilled so many wells.

Eighty-five percent of the Outer Continental Shelf of the United States of America is off-limits. This bill does nothing about that. It says, let's expedite leasing in the Alaska Naval Petroleum Reserve. Fine, but we can already drill for oil in the Alaska Naval Petroleum Reserve.

What about ANWR? ANWR is to the west of Prudhoe Bay. ANWR is to the east. We think there are 10 billion barrels of oil in a 2,000-acre section of ANWR, 10 billion barrels. Drill 10 wells, and you get 1 billion barrels a well.

If we drill on an expedited basis in ANWR, certainly there is oil to be found there, but we can already drill there, and it won't get 1 billion barrels per well.

I urge a "no" vote on this legislation.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from New York (Mr. HALL) who has been very active on this issue and very involved in our debate we had the other night.

Mr. HALL of New York. Mr. Speaker, I assure you that this Member is serious and sincere, and I strongly support the DRILL bill.

Gas in my district in the Hudson Valley is over \$4.30, and families are paying and really being hurt by this. They need serious solutions that deliver real results, and that's why I support the Drill Responsibly in Leased Lands Act to take action right now to extract more American oil in the right places.

Oil company advocates have been preying on the anxiety of Americans to push the failed ANWR drilling plan that would only lower prices by a nickel in 20 years, 20 years in the future. Our drivers need more help than that, and they need it faster. The DRILL Act answers the call, telling oil companies to drill for oil that can give more relief than ANWR ever could.

The "use it or lose it" measure requires oil companies to drill on land they have already leased or make way for someone who will. If they did that, they could double production and cut imports by one-third. It also makes it easier to lease the 20 million acres of the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska, already approved for drilling, and calls on the President to build pipelines to bring that 10.6 billion barrels of oil to market. The bill will pave the way to get at the most oil in the shortest time with the greatest responsibility.

I hope all of my colleagues will support it.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, one of the issues that is not dealt with in the drill now bill, DRILL, someone said maybe that means Democrats Reinventing the Inconvenient Liberal Lies instead of drilling now, but we just have a process that takes a long time. This process is part of what creates the 68 million acres.

The 68 million acres of idle land are not idle at all. They are involved in this process. This process is not changed one bit by the bill in front of us. Again, if the bill had come through committee, if we would have had hearings, we could have made these points in committee.

It's rather inconvenient because we don't have the ability to amend the bill today. We do not have the ability to offer a substitute bill, no motion to recommit. So we are tasked with simply explaining why the bill should receive a "no" vote.

But the process today has not changed at all, and you cannot read every single element in this block, but you can just see, as we move the chart toward me, what the steps are that are required to drill any single well. Litigation can occur at many different points. Again, this bill does absolutely nothing to stop any of this regulatory process that exists today.

There is not really such a thing as a third-world country. There are only overregulated countries, and when we look at this chart, we see why America is moving towards the status of a third-world country, because we are overregulating to the extreme, and it is winding up with millions of idle acres. Our friends want to say take it away from those companies that are not using it.

Either it is because of bureaucratic process, external litigation, but there are very good reasons why acres are idle. I think that our friends on the other side of the aisle are simply avoiding the real question of why we are not drilling in this country, why we are preferring Hugo Chavez oil, why we are giving preferential treatment to oil from OPEC, rather than this country.

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

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute to respond to the gentleman from New Mexico.

If he was listening to my opening statement and my earlier comments on this issue, I fully understand it's a lengthy process. The regulatory framework was put into place in this and many other laws of this land for a very specific reason, to protect the public health and safety and the environment.

It's a lengthy process to go through this leasing. I must tell the gentleman, and he knows it, once you obtain that lease you have overcome most of the hard obstacle of achieving production. The lands we are talking about are mostly lands already under lease. Therefore, a lot of that burden has already been overcome.

Mr. PEARCE. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. RAHALL. Yes.

Mr. PEARCE. I really appreciate and respect what the gentleman says, but when you give the figure 68 million acres are idle, I wonder how many of those acres are, in fact, in this bureaucratic process.

Mr. RAHALL. Reclaiming my time. And under lease. And if they are in that process, that is called due diligence. We don't penalize them. We don't take it away at all.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlelady from Texas, SHEILA JACKSON-LEE.

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I thank the distinguished gentleman from the great State of West Virginia, I thank you for your leadership.

Mr. Chairman, speaking of history, I just want to make mention of the fact that we have many Americans that care for it.

I am delighted that some 23,000 women from Alpha Kappa Alpha are here, Americans who are believing in their government and asking for change and asking for the leadership that is here on the floor of the House. To them, I believe we have an obligation to all Americans. It's important to know that I come from oil country. I represent large numbers of energy companies in the City of Houston. I practiced oil and gas law and have the experience of stripper-well legislation or litigation, if you will, worked on take-or-pay and curtailment.

I know very well about the Alaskan pipeline because it was being worked on in the 1970s, so we do have a right in this legislation, H.R. 6515, to ask that the Alaskan pipeline for natural gas for Americans be utilized, be put in place. It might be time now to declare a national emergency and take control of that pipeline and get it working.

But what this bill stands for is for working men and women, families. What it says is we are simply asking for due diligence, and that is to come to the National Petroleum Reserve and go ahead and acknowledge the fact that there are 22.6 million acres that can be leased. Only 3 million acres have been leased, and only 25 exploratory wells have been drilled.

We are simply saying that this is part of the larger piece, the drilling off the gulf of Texas and Louisiana, of which we in those areas applaud and salute. They have been done environmentally safely.

I ask the energy companies, of whom I am inviting to sit down in Houston in a roundtable and begin to engage in the process of doing what the building trades have said. Let us address the question of affordable energy and national security. This is a national security issue.

The question has to be if we have Federal lands, we need to be able to drill. This legislation says so. We need to be able to have due diligence, and we

need to come together to provide the kind of energy policy that is for national security.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, before I yield to Mr. BRADY, I would point out that this is the area we are talking about leasing, it is not some area up in Alaska that doesn't have any infrastructure, no pipelines. The majority is still avoiding the real question that is in front of this country, why we have \$4 gasoline is because we can't get access to supplies that have an effect on the market today.

I would recognize Mr. BRADY for 3 minutes.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is a very unfortunate time when families are struggling to try to make ends meet with these energy prices, small businesses too. Basically, Congress is debating a bait-and-switch piece of legislation.

Democrats are hoping that the American public isn't smart enough to realize there are two oil fields in Alaska—ANWR, the one that has been put off-limits, is fertile with what we believe are vast oil and gas reserves. And the National Petroleum Reserve, which, by the way, has been explored out now for 70 years.

The difference between ANWR, and the National Petroleum Reserve, is the difference between Jimmy Carter and his brother, Billy Carter. ANWR holds vast reserves in a small amount of land that can be accessed much more affordably and quickly. The National Petroleum Reserve was first drilled for two decades by the U.S. Navy, the Federal Government.

Then for the next two decades it was drilled again by the U.S. Geological Service, again, the Federal Government. For the recent decades, it has been drilled by companies, three principally, two of them in the Texas area. Unfortunately, no major finds were there. That's why most of this area, it's big, but most of it hasn't been leased because most of it is a dry hole.

What they found instead is that there are some small finds along the edge, which are very expensive to explore, it costs about \$1 billion to put an oil well there, and \$10 million a mile to try to connect it back to the existing fields. Unfortunately, even doing that, even stringing those small finds together to try to produce oil has been held up by environmental lawsuits and red tape.

So the claim that oil companies aren't exploring and doing their best, they are investing billions of dollars there. To claim that there are vast reserves that merely need to be leased, the whole world has passed on these leases year and year and year again. You can offer them every 5 minutes, and they are going to pass on them again.

We need to quit playing games with the American public. We need to open up ANWR, the other Alaskan oil field, that holds a real ability for us to take more responsibility for America's own energy needs, for us to have some say

in that price of energy, to make sure that when families are filling up, they aren't filling up with oil from the Middle East or from Venezuela or that they are paying prices dictated by Iran and Nigeria and Russia, but more American-made energy.

Ignore this bait and switch. Let's get to real energy policy, real American-made energy in ANWR.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I am reminded by my colleague from Mississippi, Mr. GENE TAYLOR, and in thinking back over history, when this moratoria was first passed by a Democratic Congress in the early eighties, there was one Ronald Reagan that occupied the White House and signed it into law. My colleagues are attacking Ronald Reagan, His Holiness? I am rather shocked.

I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY).

Mr. MARKEY. I thank the gentleman, and I congratulate him on this excellent piece of legislation. I think we know why we are here. We are here because the American consumer is being pummeled at the gasoline pump on a daily basis. They want to know, how did we get from \$30 a barrel of oil and \$1.50 for a gallon, on the day that George Bush and DICK CHENEY were sworn in, to a point now where it's now \$140 a barrel and more than \$4 a gallon gasoline now.

Well, it's a very simple formula during the Bush-Cheney era. It's two oilmen in the White House for two terms, equals \$4 a gallon gasoline. Oil math in the United States is very simple. They put together a secret energy plan, DICK CHENEY and George Bush, on day one in the White House. Today, we are out here debating whether or not it's a success.

Now, from the oil industry perspective, it is, and they were the only ones allowed into these secret meetings with the President and the Vice President.

But, for the American people, they are being tipped upside down at the pump. When we, as Democrats, say you can go right now and drill up in the petroleum reserves, you can go offshore. You can go into all of these locations that are already permitted.

No, there is absolutely no interest on the part of the oil industry. When we say to the oil industry and to the Bush administration, instead of drilling off of the beaches of the United States first, how about going to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve? How about taking 70 million barrels there and starting to deploy it, to put the fear of God into the oil industry, into speculators, into traders?

□ 1400

The President says, I would never use that because it is a free market, the price of oil on the marketplace.

So what we are saying is, don't go to the beaches first. Go to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, but they will not do it.

So the DRILL bill of Mr. RAHALL is very simple. He says, instead of drilling somewhere 20 years from now, to give an insignificant relief, Mr. RAHALL is saying, drill now in the 68 million acres that you already have, which has oil.

We need, instead of drilling for 20 years from now we need to tap, tap, tap the oil where we have it on the land in the United States today. We need to tap, tap, tap the Strategic Petroleum Reserve today, immediately, to protect the American consumer. We need to tap into renewable energy resources in order to protect the American people now with wind and solar.

The Bush administration says no, no, no; I am with the American Petroleum Institute, not the American consumer at the pump. And that is why we say to the oil industry and to the Republican Party, stop your coalition which has driven the price of oil to a point where consumers are being tipped upside down at the pump.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, the Perdido lease in the Gulf of Mexico was sold in 1996. Twelve years later, over \$2 billion has been spent before we even produce one drop of oil. That is 34,000 acres that, according to our friends, are idle. And yet, \$2 billion has been spent. Another billion dollars has to be spent before that can be produced.

And what is going to happen with this bill is that people are going to say, I am afraid I might lose my lease. 12 years to produce one, not even 1 drop of oil on 34,000 acres, and people are going to stop buying leases. This bill is going to kill production, not assist production.

I would like to recognize Mr. WESTMORELAND of Georgia for 2 minutes.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Here is a real chart of what the gas prices have done. You have got the Republican Congress, 12 years, and then you have got the Democrat Congress in just 18 months.

But I was really surprised to hear the chairman of the Resource Committee talk about exporting Alaskan oil. There has not been any Alaskan oil exported in 8 years, 8 years. And we talk about, you know, if we are going to drill, I want to know—and this is shameful, but this is snake oil. This is snake oil.

Mr. Speaker, what the American people are being sold today is snake oil. They set up a snake oil shop about 2 weeks ago over here, and it was shut down by the Republican minority because we would not go along with a suspension bill that did not allow drilling.

Here we are right back again, trying to set up another snake oil shop with new ingredients, new facts that are being stirred around in the same thing to try to come up with a different result.

It is not going to come up with a different result because we are not going to cave in to these snake oil salesmen. We are going to stand up for the American people and demand that we drill, that we open up our areas, that we use

our own natural resources, that we don't go hat in hand to foreign countries, that we don't give Hugo Chavez \$178 million a year, that we use our own resources. And we are not going to be tricked by these new escapades that are being put on by the majority party today.

I feel like I am watching a "Whose Line Is It?" Because they are off on so many different things that I don't even know, Mr. Speaker, if they have read their own bill.

They call it the DRILL bill. This is not about drilling. This is about tricking the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that we can pay attention to their words, because I want to show you, this is a quote from January of 2007.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SERRANO). The time of the gentleman from Georgia has expired.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Well, hopefully, Mr. Speaker, they can read this quote and see that there is no sincerity.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I would remind the gentleman from New Mexico, when he brings up all these bureaucratic delays and environmental lawsuits and that big long chart of his, I was here when we passed the Energy Policy Act of 2005, when I believe that side of the aisle was in control, as well as their party in control of the White House. I thought one of the purposes of EPAC, as passed by the Republican Congress, was to speed up this whole mess.

I yield 2 minutes to the gentlelady from California (Mrs. CAPPS).

Mrs. CAPPS. I thank Chairman RAHALL for his excellent leadership in crafting this legislation, the DRILL Act, which I strongly support.

The oil and gas companies, awash in profits, would have us believe they have nowhere to drill. That is just plain wrong.

According to the Bush administration, 80 percent of our oil and gas resources are available for drilling. The industry is sitting on 68 million acres of public lands where it could be drilling, but isn't. And with this bill today we are speeding up the effort to drill in the Alaska National Petroleum Reserve.

We don't need to open up more areas for drilling when industry is dragging its feet on producing where it already could. This recent push by President Bush to open up the rest of our coast to offshore drilling is a political stunt. It is not about lowering gas prices today or even in the near future. It is just a cynical attempt to change the subject from this administration's abject failure on energy.

The great oilmen rode into the White House 7½ years ago boasting about their new energy policy. Their great plan, now 95 percent implemented, has now resulted in \$4 a gallon in gas, \$500 billion in oil company profits, and an economy in crisis.

Those of us who opposed the Bush-Cheney energy plan did so because we knew this was the likely result.

Mr. Speaker, Democrats have a better idea, one that meets today's crisis and transitions us to a new energy future. We believe the President should release a small amount of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. We have done it before, and it works. It would likely bring prices down more in 10 days than the Bush-McCain offshore drilling plan would in 10 years.

In addition, oil companies should drill in the vast stretches of this country where they are now permitted, and the Bush administration should open up drilling in the Alaskan National Petroleum Reserve, build the pipelines and sell that oil and gas to Americans.

Finally, we must seriously ramp up our transition to alternative and renewable energy sources. If, in 10 years, oil and gas are still the focus of our energy debates, we surely will have failed. That would mean following the path that George W. Bush and Dick Cheney have charted, and we know where that leads us.

We need to change direction. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the chairman of the committee pointing out that the Energy Policy Act of 2005 was supposed to speed up the delays. And, in fact, we did.

You would remember, sir, that it was in our committee that we established the five categorical exclusions. Those are the categorical exclusions that were dropped out in your energy bill earlier this year that slowed the process down.

You also remember that we established the pilot offices. The pilot offices were established in several places across the country, and your legislation stopped those too.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is reminded to address his remarks to the Chair.

Mr. PEARCE. Excuse me, Mr. Speaker. I was simply addressing the questions that were addressed to me by the gentleman from the floor. I would thank you for that reminder, and would point out that, in fact, what we are doing here today, we are saying that people have been laying on these leases, that they are letting them lie idle.

But it was actually the Democrats of the Energy Policy Act of 1992 that passed, Democrats in the majority. And you notice that we have many of the gentlemen on the floor of the House today. Mr. HOYER, Mr. MILLER, Ms. PELOSI and Mr. RAHALL all voted yes in saying that we need, not just 5 years, but 10 years to produce these wells. And now we are having the finger pointed by the same people today, saying that it is irresponsible oil companies who are delaying too long. So the flip-flopping that we are seeing across the country right now is absolutely amazing.

We would love to hear the Democrats say that they want to drill and drill now. The only problem is that I have

heard Democrats say that drill is a four-letter word. Well, either they can't spell or they can't count; I don't know which.

But let's yield 2 minutes to Mr. CARTER of Texas.

Mr. CARTER. I have been listening to this debate, and it has been extremely interesting. But I think that we have got a situation here where, because of the fantastic nature of the Congress, nobody understands what we are talking about. In reality, we are talking about leasing, and they are saying use the lease you paid for.

Now, I think the American people, almost every one of them out there, they know what a lease is because probably they have leased an apartment, or they have leased a home or they have leased a car. They have leased something in their life. And I doubt very seriously if they paid a lease price, a pretty good size lease price that came out of their family's pocket, and then didn't use what they leased. They parked the car in the garage and didn't use it. They rented the apartment for a year and never set foot in it, but lived someplace else. Or if they were in business, they rented a warehouse to store things, and then didn't put anything in the warehouse and wasted their money.

Now, what we are talking about here is leases that the people who are in the oil business have spent billions, with a B, of dollars to lease. Does it make sense to anyone's common sense that they would spend that kind of money and then not look to see if there is some way they could get their money back on the deal? Of course they have.

And in fact, as KEVIN BRADY pointed out, they have been looking and looking and looking and looking in this area to find enough resources to justify billions of dollars worth of expenditures to drill.

I will tell you, you are welcome to drill in my back yard. I have got about two, a little over 2 acres. I will lease it tomorrow, okay? But there is no oil in my back yard, and I don't expect anyone to lease it or drill there because they know in Round Rock, Texas there is not any oil.

Now, the same thing goes here. You can talk about use it or lose it, but once you know there is no production in an area, there makes no sense to spend millions of dollars to find nothing. That is what this is all about. Common sense tells you there is no oil there.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to yield 1 minute to the gentlelady from New Hampshire, CAROL SHEA-PORTER.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, almost 8 years ago two oilmen arrived at the White House. They devised an oil policy that left everybody else out. And now we are seeing their very successful oil policy where we are paying for their secret policy. And yet we didn't hear a word from the Republican side of the aisle. And now, when we are paying almost \$5 a gallon, suddenly

they are talking about drilling in ANWR.

Now, they know, as well as we do, as well as the Department of Energy knows and says, that it would take 10 years to get any gas from that. The American family would spend \$57,000 before they saw one penny from the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. We need to drill now and we need to drill domestically, and they have the leases.

And don't ever be surprised by the fact that the oil companies are claiming there is nothing underneath there anyway, because what they are really doing is buying back their stock.

So my suggestion to the oil companies is to get to work now. Start drilling domestically with what you have. You have 80 percent of the leased land. Use it or lose it.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I recognize the gentlelady from Oklahoma (Ms. FALLIN) for 2 minutes.

Ms. FALLIN. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 6515 is the "use it or lose it" bill that was defeated last month, but today it is coming back with just window dressing added to this version.

The previous version of this bill, H.R. 6251, was rejected by the majority of Republicans and nearly all the oil patch Democrats, including the chairman of the Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee.

Like the last version, H.R. 6515 breaches contracts by requiring terms under which oil companies may use and bid on leases. In fact, this piece of legislation may actually drive away oil and gas companies from the U.S. and lower the production of energy. It is based on a claim that has been dismissed by the Department of Interior, that the industry is stockpiling 68 million acres of Federal leases.

This bill cannot hide 30 years of shutting off access. In Jimmy Carter's last year as President, over 100 million acres were leased onshore, and it reached 160 million acres under Ronald Reagan. In a good year it is now just 50 million acres. The government and the Democrat leadership is the one that is stockpiling oil and gas leases, and the Speaker is keeping it off the market. Over two billion, that's over 200,000 million acres are not leased.

And according to today's New York Times, when the President decided to lift the ban on OCS oil and gas production, the Speaker responded, I'm not going to let him get away with it.

Well, H.R. 6515 and the Speaker are not living up to their promises.

This bill also purports to open up the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska, but the NRPA is already open. Just yesterday the Secretary of the Interior announced a major lease sale for this fall. So 6515 could delay the drilling because the bill now injects new environmental language that is already existing in the NPRA law. And this is an invitation for environmental groups to sue to stop oil production. And they have been filing lawsuits for the last 10 years to stop the production. This is a bad piece of legislation.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

□ 1415

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I was sort of shocked to hear my friend from New Mexico complaining about rules and regulations that fetter the oil-extraction industry as restrictions that make us Third World. Well, you know, think for a moment about the abuses we see worldwide in terms of corruption and environmental abuse, and we have those for a reason.

But even if you're going to ignore that, if you think environmental protection and administrative controls are infringements on freedom and unnecessary, gee, as my friend from West Virginia points out, you passed an energy bill in 2005 that was supposed to streamline it. The Republicans and two oilmen have been in charge for the last 7½ years. If it doesn't work right, whose fault is that administratively?

I would suggest the gentleman look in the mirror and then vote for our legislation.

Mr. PEARCE. The gentleman asks a question whose fault is it. Let's read down through a list of observations: Wilderness Society v. Wisely, 16 leases, 11,000 acres stopped; Montana Wilderness Alliance v. Fry, stops three leases, limits additional 9; Northern Cheyenne Tribe v. Norton, injunction covering 93 percent of the resource area; Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership challenges total of 127 APDs, applications for permits to drill; Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance v. Kempthorne stopped 60 wells; Potash Association stopped 72 wells; Biodiversity Conservation Alliance suspends leases; Wyoming Outdoor Council v. BLM, 11 parcels BLM stopped; National Audubon Society challenging the Resource Operational Division, and then we have Pennaco Energy v. U.S.; Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance; Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance.

The reason that oil and gas exploration is stopped, the reason that we have 68 million acres is because of litigation and excess regulation, many of which do nothing, nothing to improve the environment. Most are bureaucratic delays.

I would suggest that the gentleman should—maybe if he thinks that he can produce oil more cheaply and more effectively than the people who are producing it, maybe he should be there and actually be drilling some wells and find out for himself the difficulty of producing.

Mr. Speaker, I would recognize the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. TERRY) for 1 minute.

Mr. TERRY. Ask yourselves why folks on the left who are more green than the Riddler and the Democrat leadership that has vowed to prevent any new drilling support this bill. Do I smell hypocrisy? No. Because this bill doesn't open up any new drilling. In fact on balance, it makes it more dif-

ficult to drill in an area already open for drilling. It poses new requirements to prove that you have to fully have used other leases before you can get any one there. A new requirement that any company must have a union contract in place before receiving a lease are just some of the couple of examples.

This is not a drilling bill that's going to get us more resources. It's a rhetorical political bill. Don't be suckered. Vote "no."

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, could you give us the time remaining on both sides.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New Mexico has 4 minutes left. The gentleman from West Virginia has 6½ minutes left.

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

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, before I recognize the gentleman from Michigan, again we would just look at one area. This is the Powder River Basin, and 86 percent of the leased land is idle because of the fear of lawsuits. It is lawsuits that are stopping much of the production, and yet the gentleman's bill does nothing. It does nothing to stop the lawsuits.

If we are serious about drilling and drilling now, then let's put something substantial in this bill, let's take it back to committee, let's amend it like we should have, let's put things that restrict the litigation that is stopping Americans from receiving the oil that they deserve and the lower price of gasoline.

Mr. Speaker, I would recognize the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MCCOTTER) for 1 minute.

Mr. MCCOTTER. I thank you.

This bill is worse than nothing; it is the illusion of something. As was alluded to by my colleague from Nebraska, when you see people who claim to be more green than the Maid of Arran supporting a drilling bill, questions do arise.

In the final analysis, I must be honest. In fairness, this bill will do one thing. It will unleash the new power of the Democratic Party's hybrid of solar and wind power. It's called hot air. Now, hot air will not fuel your car, it will not fly your plane, and it will not lower your gas prices.

I would point out before you vote on this, remember the more hot air that you unleash over this, the more disastrous the consequences to both gas prices and global warming.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN).

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, President Bush has called upon the country for more domestic drilling. This bill says yes, Mr. President, let's drill. Let's drill in those areas that are already leased and already ready to go because what the President has not told the American people is that there are over 68 million acres of Federal lands already leased to the big oil and

gas companies. They are not moving forward on those leases. They are sitting tight. They like the status quo. They're making record profits. Gas is over \$4 a gallon. They like it that way.

What the President said is don't push forward on those already existing leases. Let's go up in the Arctic Wildlife Refuge. But what he hasn't said is the Department of Energy, his own Department of Energy, has found that we won't see one drop of gas on the market for another 10 years as a result of that drilling, and even then the price will be insignificant.

If we really want to get going now, two things we've got to do: One, we need to begin to release oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. That's 10 days until it hits market. Not 10 years. Two, we've got to crack down on the speculators, and this Congress is going to move forward on that measure. We hope we have the President's support because he has said no to releasing oil from the SPR.

In the longer term, we have to do two other things: responsible drilling, and that's what this bill calls for, and we need to make that investment in renewable energy and energy efficiency. If we're going to truly reduce and crack our addiction to oil, especially foreign oil, we need to move forward on those fronts.

This is a responsible bill that says to the President, yeah, let's start drilling on all of those areas where the oil companies have the ability to do that. They're sitting on it. They like it that way. Let's send them a message.

Mr. PEARCE. Again, Mr. Speaker, I would remind the gentleman that oil companies are very rarely sitting on it. They are delayed by regulation. They're delayed by litigation, and if we were serious about drilling and drilling now, drill today, we would do something more than recommend a Black and Decker drill. I was surprised to hear our chairman of the committee say that because it takes billions of dollars to build these rigs out in the middle of the gulf, and to suggest that it is quite as simple as grabbing a Black and Decker and going and drilling with your hand, simply just, I think, intentionally understates the difficulty in providing low-cost gasoline for consumers in today's market. I was surprised.

Mr. RAHALL. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. PEARCE. Yes, I would yield.

Mr. RAHALL. Of course I was being facetious in case you didn't understand my southern drawl.

But in regard to the issue of litigation lawsuits, lawsuits, lawsuits to which you refer, if I might respond. In regard to the NPRA, the National Petroleum Reserve, ConocoPhillips currently holds 183 leases up there making them one of the largest leaseholders. As of July 16, 2008, I believe that's yesterday, ConocoPhillips has told my staff, "There are no lawsuits, litigation, on any ConocoPhillips leases in the NPRA nor have there been."



According to several other sources, there are no lawsuits pending to stop lease sales, exploration, or development of the NPRA, the National Petroleum Reserve.

Mr. PEARCE. Reclaiming my time.

I would just point out to the gentleman that the 34,000 acres with the Perdido lease has got no production coming from it yet. It's declared as idle according to your specifications. And I would just remind the gentleman that there are always reasons why production is not occurring. No one is withholding oil at \$140 a barrel.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I am very honored and proud to yield at this time 1 minute to our superb majority leader, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding, and I thank him for bringing this bill to the floor.

Drill Responsibly In Leased Lands. The assertion was that Democrats are not for drilling. This gives lie to that assertion. This says, as we have been saying, there are 88 million acres available for drilling right now. Those acres are subject to lawsuit, my friend says. Any acreage would be subject to lawsuits. This acreage is subject to the availability of drills. Black and Decker or otherwise. What an absurd, I say to my friend, assertion. There are no drills available currently to drill in new lands here or other places.

The minority leader, I presume, is going to be speaking in some few minutes. He said this: "They're," meaning the Democrats, "offering excuses designed to get people thinking about something other than drilling. They worship at the altar of radical environmentalists."

This is, of course, the crowd that said global warming didn't exist until just a few months ago. This is the crowd that has been in charge of the White House for the last 7½ years.

The gentleman from New Mexico says, Gee whiz, let's bring the price of gasoline down.

They had an energy policy which they came up with under DICK CHENEY. Some people say it failed. I'm not sure the oil companies thought it failed. It was \$1.46 when they brought up the policy. It's now \$4 at the pump. The oil companies are making the biggest profits they've made in their history.

The assertion Mr. BOEHNER made is, as I said again, that we worship at the altar of radical environmentalists. Let me quote one of those radical environmentalists: "I have been an oilman my whole life, but this is one emergency we can't drill our way out of." That radical environmentalist's name is T. Boone Pickens, and as he said earlier in that statement, "I have been an oilman all my life." He understands very well what can and cannot be done.

This bill says let's drill. Let's get American product to American consumers and try to bring down prices. We've also asked the SPR be released.

Not all of it. Maintain most of it. Why? To bring prices down, to free the oil that Americans have bought for their use and to bring prices down. With Americans being pummeled by \$4-a-gallon gas, it's high time that America did just that. With the passage of the DRILL bill, America will move decisively to increase its domestic oil production.

Now, ladies and gentlemen of the House, isn't it an ironic happenstance that the day before we put this bill on the floor, 24 hours before we put this bill on the floor and say let's drill in the National Petroleum Reserve, isn't it ironic that the White House announces they're going to do just that? My, my, my. What an awful idea we had—right up until the time 24 hours ago when the administration decided they would do it.

I'm glad they've done it. And if our actions spurred their action, so be it. And we're going to take credit. Because they've been in office 7½ years. They took it 24 hours ago. What was the reaction of the oil industry? They were happy.

Now, nobody is saying if you have land over here you have got to use it before you get land over here. What we're saying is you can't inventory land. You can't inventory acreage. You can't be a huge, rich oil company and want no competition and therefore inventory land. We're saying that. Yes, we are. We think that makes good sense for the American public.

Today we call their bluff, I think. Yesterday they saw us. And they said, we'll drill here.

□ 1430

Mr. Speaker, 68 million acres of American oil-producing land are sitting leased, available, and idle. There is even more land available for drilling in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, or NPR-A, which we're dealing with today.

Combined, we are talking about an area the size of—and all my colleagues listening to this debate and anybody else who is listening to it, they ought to know currently what is available—the area of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and most of my own State, Maryland. That entire area is currently available for drilling, for getting American product to Americans.

Let's help the oil companies get that oil out of the ground and get it flowing to the Americans who need it. The DRILL bill speeds up the leasing process in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. It ensures that Alaskan oil will fill American gas tanks.

That is, I presume, why, when they knew this bill was coming to the floor, yesterday the administration said they were going to have this land leased. Yesterday. The American public is pretty smart. There's nobody I think that's hearing my voice, wherever they are, doubts that if they just did it yes-

terday, after being in office for 7½ years, then maybe, maybe, maybe there was a relationship between Chairman RAHALL bringing this bill to the floor and the action yesterday to try to preclude the credit for doing what we think is good policy. Hopefully, we're all going to vote for good policy today and vote for this bill.

It calls upon the President to speed up the completion of the Alaskan oil and gas pipelines. That's what it does because we need those lines to get that oil and product, natural gas and oil, to market and to Americans.

"Drill on the leases you have, or let somebody else do it. But don't just sit on them while Americans are paying \$4 a gallon. Use it or lose it."

The gentleman says, well, they're not just sitting there; they're afraid of lawsuits. We may all be afraid of lawsuits. We may never drive our car because we're afraid of an accident or a lawsuit. That's not what they're in the business for, and very frankly, in terms of fear, when you're making the largest profit for a product, you go look for more, unless of course you want to keep the price high and supply down.

Why is our plan better than the Republicans'? One, it means more oil. The National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, which is already approved for drilling, has an estimated 10.6 billion barrels of oil. ANWR has 10.4 billion. And the information we have is the oil companies aren't too interested in drilling there.

Two, our plan means more oil, faster. Unlike ANWR and protected coastal areas, NPR-A plus the 68 million leased acres elsewhere are currently approved for production.

And get this, right now, today, available pipelines reach to within 5 miles of the National Petroleum Reserve, and if the pipelines are completed soon, we will speed production up even more.

Third, I see no reason to give even more handouts of public land to companies enjoying record profits and billions of dollars in taxpayer subsidies unless they are using that which they currently have. Inventorying land, inventorying acreage, inventorying possible oil supplies is not what the American people want.

What the American people want is they want production. They want performance. They want prices to go down. That's why we say let's start on the land they already have. Let them eat their vegetables before they think about dessert.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Would the majority leader yield?

Mr. HOYER. I yield to the gentleman from Louisiana.

Mr. BOUSTANY. I would like to ask the gentleman: How can we accurately know what those reserves are if we can't even have seismic, modern seismic activity done? So, that's the reason to open the Outer Continental Shelf, to at least get the process started. If the seismic shows nothing, these companies lose the lease. That's current law. So I don't understand the majority's opposition to opening the Outer Continental Shelf.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, what the majority says is we've done seismic, we've had available 10-year leases to do the research on 68 million in the Lower 48. Thirty-three million of those are on the Outer Continental Shelf, and 20 million acres are in the Alaskan Petroleum Reserve.

What we are saying is, we have available now. You don't have to do the seismic. Presumably, that's what you've been doing on the 68 million acres. If you haven't been doing it, then let's release it and give it to somebody else who will because, as you point out, the seismics have not been done in other areas. They have been done here, presumably by people who already had available the leases.

Mr. BOUSTANY. But if the majority leader would yield.

Mr. HOYER. I'll yield one more time, and then I want to finish my comments.

Mr. BOUSTANY. I thank the majority leader.

The point is, if we have tight supply and demand, then we should be opening up all these areas for seismic analysis to get accurate information about these reserves, and if the seismic shows nothing, there's no activity; you lose the lease. The companies lose the money. That is the current law, and I think the American people want an explanation as to why we're not doing that. We should be looking at all of our potential resources.

We, in Louisiana, have known for a long time how this works. In fact, Louisiana delegations for 35 years have fought to open up additional Outer Continental Shelf and let the States share in the revenue.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, what the American people want, they want to know why we're simply arguing that we ought to have more available when we haven't used what we now have available. That's what the American people want to know, and that's what this bill says, and that's what we're arguing.

Your argument, with all due respect, is not necessarily wrong, but it certainly is not a replacement for what we have provided here. Let's move ahead on that which is already authorized, and then we can certainly authorize more to see whether or not more is available.

Mr. Speaker, we have lived through 7½ years of Republican energy policy: plans put forth by Vice President CHENEY, a bill passed in 2005—let me stress, a bill passed in 2005. Oil was approximately \$2. Their plan was passed, passed through this House, passed through the Senate, sent to the President, he signed it. Three years later, the price of gasoline has doubled. It is a failed policy. We need a new policy. We need to make sure we use the land we have.

And that's why it's so ironic that just yesterday, I tell my friend from Louisiana, isn't it ironic that just yesterday the President made an an-

nouncement the day before this bill was going to be announced that he wanted, in October, to allow the leases to move forward on this land which we're talking about? He apparently agrees with the objectives of this bill.

With this responsible domestic production bill we can start today. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle: Let's use the resources that are available right now on leased lands. Drill responsibly in these leased lands. Let's keep America's oil in America. Vote for the DRILL bill. Let's make America more energy independent.

And before I close, let me reiterate what T. Boone Pickens said because the nub of this debate is not just about more oil. The nub of this debate and the nub of the failure in the past of perhaps all of us has been that we have not honestly said to the American public, the only way we will solve this problem, the only way we will become energy independent is to ensure a vigorous program of pursuing renewables so that we will have energy for the future, not just for today; for our children, not just for ourselves.

Vote for this DRILL bill. It is a responsible way forward.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert two documents that show a history of litigation in the NPR-A. If the gentleman from West Virginia is unaware of those, maybe that would help.

LITIGATION HISTORY: OIL AND GAS LEASING IN THE NATIONAL PETROLEUM RESERVE—ALASKA

In 1980 Congress amended the Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act (Public Law 96-514), directing the Secretary of the Interior to carry out "an expeditious program of competitive leasing of oil and gas" in the 23 million acre National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska. Pursuant to this directive, BLM developed an expedited leasing program.

In 1983, BLM completed an environmental impact statement (EIS) and issued a record of decision (ROD) opening all but 1,416,000 acres of NPR-A to leasing. The ROD called for five annual lease sales of approximately two million acres each. Soon after the release of the ROD a lawsuit was filed by two Inupiat Eskimos in U.S. District Court for Alaska. The plaintiffs, together with amicus State of Alaska and North Slope Borough, sought a preliminary injunction blocking the lease sale. They contended that BLM failed to make certain subsistence-related determinations required by Section 810 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), 16 U.S.C. §3120. After a trial on the merits, the district court held in favor of BLM, finding that such determinations were not required. However the court issued an injunction precluding execution of the leases pending appeal of the matter to the Ninth Circuit. The district court's decision was affirmed on appeal in *Kunakana v. Clark*, 742 F.2d 1145 (9th Cir. 1984), thus allowing issuance of the leases. By 1998, all leases issued under the 1983 ROD had expired without a significant discovery.

In 1998, BLM completed an EIS and issued a ROD addressing the 4.6 million acre Northeast Planning Area of NPR-A. The ROD opened 87 percent of the area to leasing, excluding an area that included most of the submerged lands of Teshekpuk Lake and lands to the north and east of the lake. Several environmental groups filed suit in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia

(*Wilderness Soc'y v. Babbitt*, Civ. No. 98-2395), alleging violations of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and seeking an injunction to preclude lease sales under the ROD. In an unreported decision, the court ruled in favor of BLM as to the plaintiffs' motion for a preliminary injunction, thus allowing the lease sales to move forward. BLM held lease sales in 1999 and 2002, which resulted in the issuance of several leases near Teshekpuk Lake. However, the court has yet to issue a final decision on the merits, and the case remains pending without any action having been taken by the court for several years now.

After completing an EIS, in 2004 BLM issued a ROD addressing the Northwest Planning Area. The ROD opened all 8.8 million acres of the planning area to leasing, but deferred 1,570,000 acres near the village of Wainwright from leasing for ten years. Several environmental groups filed suit against the Department of the Interior in U.S. District Court in Alaska. The plaintiffs argued that BLM acted arbitrarily in violation of NEPA by authorizing leasing in the entire planning area without considering reasonable alternatives and without doing a site-specific analysis of each of the areas affected by the proposed action. The plaintiffs further argued that the biological opinion was arbitrary in violation of the Endangered Species Act, alleging that it was insufficiently thorough, not co-extensive with the ROD, and paid insufficient attention to the uneven distribution of eiders within the affected area. The district court ruled in favor of BLM on all counts, *N. Alaska Envtl. Ctr. v. Norton*, 361 F. Supp. 2d 1069 (D. AK 2005). The decision was upheld on appeal in its entirety in *N. Alaska Envtl. Ctr. v. Kempthorne*, 457 F.3d 969 (9th Cir. 2006).

Seeking to open additional areas of the Northeast Planning Area to oil and gas leasing pursuant to a 2002 recommendation contained in the President's National Energy Policy, BLM completed an amendment to the 1998 EIS in 2005 and issued an amended ROD in 2006. The amended ROD sought to open for leasing all lands in the planning area except the submerged lands underlying Teshekpuk Lake. In doing so, 389,000 acres that had been unavailable under the 1998 ROD would be available. Several environmental groups filed suit against the Department of the Interior in U.S. District Court in Alaska, alleging violations of NEPA and the Endangered Species Act. Holding in favor of the plaintiffs in part, in *National Audubon Society v. Kempthorne*, No. 1:05-cv-00008-JKS (Sep. 25, 2006), the court vacated the ROD. The court found that the amended EIS failed to adequately analyze cumulative impacts associated with the adjoining Northwest Planning Area, and that for similar reasons the biological opinion was inadequate as well. The Department chose not to appeal the adverse decision, but instead proceeded to correct the deficiencies noted by the court by supplementing the amended EIS and revising the biological opinion accordingly. BLM issued the final Supplemental EIS on May 23, 2008. Under the Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act, potential plaintiffs have 60 days from issuance of a final EIS to bring suit (i.e., until July 22, 2008)

[From the Anchorage Daily News, Dec. 20, 2007]

GROUPS SUE TO PROTECT RARE LOON IN ALASKA'S ARCTIC OIL RESERVE

(By Dan Joling)

Three conservation groups sued the federal government Wednesday hoping to block Arctic petroleum development through protections for a rare loon that breeds in Alaska's National Petroleum Reserve.

The groups claim yellow-billed loons are threatened by industrialization in the 23 million-acre reserve that covers much of Alaska's western North Slope.

"The yellow-billed loon is one of the rarest and most vulnerable birds in the United States," said Andrea Treece, an attorney with the Center for Biological Diversity. "If the loon is to survive in a warming Arctic, we need to protect its critical habitat, not open it up for oil development."

Inundation of the loons' freshwater breeding areas by rising sea levels tied to global warming is also considered a threat, but petroleum development is the petitioners' main concern.

The lawsuit names Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. According to the conservation groups, the agency is more than two years behind the legal deadline for taking action to protect the yellow-billed loons under provisions of the Endangered Species Act.

A spokesman for the agency said a decision on protections is coming.

"We expect to have money available in the fiscal year '08 budget and then complete the status review and the 12-month finding," said Bruce Woods.

The Center for Biological Diversity, the National Resources Defense Council, Pacific Environment and other U.S. and Russian scientific and conservation organizations filed a petition in April 2004 to list yellow-billed loons as threatened or endangered. After a petition is filed, agencies have a 12-month deadline to issue a proposed rule listing a species or to decide listing is not warranted.

The Fish and Wildlife Service only last May accepted the petition for review. The determination required the agency to solicit public comment, carry out a status review of the loons and, if merited, issue a proposed rule to protect loons. That has not happened and the lawsuit will seek an order from a federal judge telling the agency to do so.

The yellow-billed loon breeds in tundra wetlands in Alaska, Canada and Russia, and winters along the west coasts of Canada and the United States.

The Fish and Wildlife Service estimates there are 16,500 yellow-billed loons in the world, including 3,700 to 4,900 that breed in Alaska. More than 75 percent of the Alaska breeders nest in the petroleum reserve and many nest in areas recently opened to oil and gas development near Teshekpuk Lake and along the Colville River, according to conservation groups.

Smaller numbers breed on the Seward Peninsula, the land mass east of the Bering Strait, and on St. Lawrence Island in the Bering Sea.

President Warren Harding created the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska in 1923 as an emergency oil supply for the Navy. Current leasing plans come from a presidential directive guiding the Department of the Interior to foster oil and gas development there.

The lawsuit was filed in San Francisco by the Center for Biological Diversity, the National Resources Defense Council and Pacific Environment.

So we now arrive at the point of conclusion of this debate. Protests are up 706 percent. That stops oil production. This bill does nothing against the protests.

Litigation is up in this one case. Eighty-six percent of the available acres are undrilled because of litigation. This bill does nothing about litigation.

In this particular case, 33 percent of this in Utah is out of production be-

cause of a combination of litigation and bureaucratic delays. This bill does nothing about that.

Finally, 1992, the Democrat majority extended the drilling from 5 to 10 years because they understood at that point what the Democrat Congress of today does not understand: that it does take time to prove up on leases, find if there is oil there, and produce them. The entire allegation that 68 million acres are completely idle is one that's intended, I think, to misconstrue the whole situation.

And finally, the entire underlying intent of the bill, the use-it-or-lose-it, is already a part of BLM regulations. So this bill does nothing except it duplicates what is already in place for many instances, and it threatens companies with the loss of valuable resources and will actually drive the price of gasoline up.

I would urge a "no" vote on the bill today and give the gentleman thanks for the debate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman from New Mexico has expired.

Mr. RAHALL. I would say to the gentleman from New Mexico, again, we realize this is a lengthy process, leasing and permitting and getting into actual production. But again, a lot of the regulatory framework that's in place is in place for a darn good reason, to protect the public, to protect their health, to protect their safety, and to protect our environment, regulatory framework of which I happen to be proud to have supported over the years and I think should be there for that public protection.

I'd be glad to yield the gentleman from Illinois 1 minute.

Mr. EMANUEL. Thank you very much for the time.

Three years ago this summer, President Bush signed into law in 2005, in August—July 28, we passed it here in the House—an energy bill which the President said at that time, "I'm confident that one day the Americans will look back on this bill as a vital step towards a more secure and prosperous Nation that is less dependent on foreign sources of energy."

At that time, gas was \$2.29 a gallon. By any measurement, that legislation has failed. Today, it's \$4.11 a gallon, and our dependence on foreign oil is greater now than it was then.

What has happened here is we have provided the oil and gas companies \$15 billion in subsidies of taxpayer money to drill. They're not drilling on the 68 million acres. We have provided them 68 million acres on the Lower 48 to drill. They are not drilling.

So we have a simple thing: use-it-or-lose-it. Get drilling. We agree that supply is part of it. We also agree that efficiency is part of it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. RAHALL. I yield the gentleman 30 more seconds.

Mr. EMANUEL. There are three parts to this: supply, efficiency, and alternatives.

When we increased the fuel efficiency of cars, we moved on one of those pieces. Here, we're moving on supply. We're asking you to join us to make sure that we have adequate supplies out there. There are 68 million acres to be drilled, and as the majority leader said earlier, it's ironic on the day that we have the bill on the floor, finally we're going to have 2 million acres opened up in Alaska.

This requires that there's an annual offering of more property up to be drilling. It does not have to only occur when the Congress puts a bill on the floor to threaten an administration that you finally move more supply to market.

This is a comprehensive approach to solving the energy crisis that the country faces.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to extend debate by 10 minutes, equally divided.

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

Mr. RAHALL. We're prepared to wrap up, Mr. Speaker. I object.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Objection is heard.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, to conclude our debate on this side, and in order to promote the passage of this DRILL Act, which will bring American energy to American consumers in a responsible way, I yield 1 minute to our distinguished Speaker of the House, the gentlelady from California, NANCY PELOSI.

□ 1445

Ms. PELOSI. I thank the gentleman for yielding. I thank him for his extraordinary leadership in bringing the most extensive drilling legislation to the floor of the House. Thank you, Mr. RAHALL.

Because part of what we must do in order to bring down the price of energy to the American people is to increase domestic supply and to protect the consumer. And increasing domestic supply means that we must remove all doubt in the minds of those who wish to drill and those who want the drilling to take place that there are 68 million acres in the lower 48 States where drilling is allowed: "Drill Responsibly in Leased Lands," the DRILL bill.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the documentation of that amount of land. Thirty-three million of those acres are offshore. So the question is, why do you not want us to drill offshore? We do, in 33 million acres. Why do you not want us to drill on land? We do, in tens of millions more acres in the lower 48.

And then this bill takes us to Alaska, where the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska is a bigger source of oil than the ANWR, the refuge in Alaska. So why those who wish to make an argument here are saying we won't let you drill: No, we want you to drill. Why are you saying this is the law, they have to do it anyway? Well, they aren't because these lands are not drilled upon.

We're not getting the product from them.

So in order to protect the consumer and to increase domestic supply, we're talking about two things: We're talking about protecting the consumer with legislation to curb unnecessary, excessive and abusive speculation in the marketplace. That debate is going on in the Senate as we speak here right now and will come to the House soon.

Increasing domestic supply means facilitating drilling where it is allowed already—in tens of millions of acres across our country. It means investments in renewable resources, because that is part of our energy supply now and for the future. And it also means an immediate call upon the President to free our oil. Right now, the President is sitting on over 700 million barrels of oil. This is oil that has been bought and paid for by the American taxpayer and is warehoused in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. It is there for emergencies, and we have a national emergency in terms of the energy crisis in our country.

The Strategic Petroleum Reserve is 97.5 percent full, the fullest it has ever been in history. All we're asking the President to do is to take 10 percent of that oil and release it over time into the marketplace; increase the supply, reduce the price.

Ten days ago, we called upon the President to free our oil. If he had done so at that time, we would already have an immediate impact at the pump, 10 days. Release the oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, 10 days later we would have had an impact at the pump.

What our colleagues are suggesting about going beyond the areas that already have permits all ready to go will take 10 years to get to the pump. Even the President, who is advocating drilling in the protected areas of OCS, even he said in his press conference the other day, this is not an immediate fix. This will not lower the price at the pump in the near future. Even the President has said that.

So this is a false argument. It's an argument trying to be used to divert attention from the fact that President Bush has had a failed energy policy for the last 7.5 years. If he had acted earlier, we would be reaping the benefits of our investments and renewables. But there has been a resistance in the Congress and within the White House to these changes.

So here we are today at a moment of truth. The truth is that there is a great deal more oil to be exploited in our country. The truth is that it is not being exploited, and this bill would encourage that exploitation. It would encourage those who have the leases to use it or lose it, and if they don't want to exploit the situation, to let someone else drill and produce oil and gas in those acres.

It also says that in Alaska we should be drilling in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. Instead of having a

fight over a protected area, let's go to an area that is already permitted for leasing and has more oil in the first place. The bill also says, when we do that, we must bring that product to market.

So let's complete the pipeline—it's 5 miles there to complete the pipeline—and then build the natural gas pipeline to take natural gas from Alaska to the United States. The only reason that has not happened is because the President has not decided it should.

All of this is only a decision. We call upon the President to use the good offices of the President of the United States to encourage those who are in the final stages of decision making on this to move. And then the supply of energy to our country will be vast, and it will create probably a hundred thousand new jobs. Building the Alaska Pipeline, the Natural Gas Alaska Pipeline, would be the biggest infrastructure project in history. And all the President has to do is give the signal that this should be done. He hasn't in 7.5 years. This bill calls upon him to do so.

So when we drill, and when we bring the oil and gas down to our country, we are saying that none of this oil that is being produced can be exported to foreign countries. It is there not for the profit of these corporations, but to meet the energy demands of the American people.

Essential to all of this, though, is to ignore the false claims being made of the impact of drilling on these protected lands. Maybe the science and the technology one day will make that feasible, and we should always keep our minds open to that. But to say we have to go there—which will take much longer to bring product to market—is just a diversion from the matter at hand, which is, a failed policy in the White House. As Mr. MARKEY said, two oilmen in the White House, \$4-plus a gallon at the pump. The President is sitting on 700 million barrels of oil that would bring down that price at the pump.

Free our oil, Mr. President. "Use it or lose it" to our oil companies. End speculation that is driving up the price. Protect the American consumer. Vote for the DRILL Act.

I thank Mr. RAHALL again for his leadership.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I will vote for this bill.

The bill is similar to one I voted for last month that dealt with Federal lands that have been leased for energy exploration and development under the Mineral Leasing Act but where such activities have not yet occurred.

As I noted last month, the debate over this legislation has included statements—by some supporters and some opponents alike—that exaggerates the likely effect of enactment. For example, I believe it would be better to avoid the "use it or lose it" rhetoric that oversimplifies the issue and fails to reflect the reality that oil and gas exploration is a complicated commercial and scientific enterprise involving efforts that do not easily fit within strict regulatory timelines.

But while that part of the bill may not be as far-reaching as some have claimed, I think it is a reasonable response to current conditions and should be passed. In essence, it would bar the current holders of federal mineral leases—whether for onshore or offshore areas—from obtaining additional leases unless they are able to show that they are "diligently developing" the leases they already hold. The Secretary of the Interior would be responsible for spelling out in regulations exactly what would be needed to show such "due diligence."

Current Interior Department regulations include provisions addressing due diligence requirements, so this is not a new concept. But I think giving it greater emphasis is appropriate in view of the continuing importance of oil even as we work to increase the availability and use of alternative energy sources. More useful in terms of energy policy, this bill will reinforce the provisions of current law that aim to prevent hoarding of leases. And providing an incentive for relinquishment of some leases may increase the opportunity for others to explore for and produce oil or gas from those lands.

This approach is similar to that taken when Congress amended the coal-leasing laws by passing the Coal Leasing Act Amendments of 1976 over President Ford's veto. That 1976 legislation provided for a due-diligence requirement as part of a comprehensive overhaul of the laws governing leasing and development of federally-owned coal resources—a provision that some analysts have said had the most immediate practical effect of any of the legislation's various provisions. As a result, for several decades the holders of federal coal leases have been required by law to diligently develop their leases, which has aided in the orderly and efficient development of the nation's coal. I think a similar reinforcement of existing law for leasing of other federal energy resources makes sense.

I have a similar reaction to the other provisions of the bill—they certainly are not all that needs to be done to improve our energy policies, but they can make at least a modest contribution in the right direction.

These provisions include a requirement for the Department of the Interior to offer at least one lease sale annually in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska. This is an area of well-established potential that was initially made available for leasing in the Clinton Administration, and with regard to which the current Administration just today announced that 2.6 million acres would be offered at lease sales in the near future. Dictating a leasing timetable in legislation is unusual, but the potentially beneficial effects on prices from tapping the reserves in this part of Alaska are undeniable.

In addition, the bill would reinstate a ban on the export of Alaskan oil that was previously a matter of federal law. Oil is a globally-traded commodity, so the effect of this will be limited, but it may, to some extent, reduce reliance on exports.

The bill calls on the President to facilitate the completion of oil pipelines into the National Petroleum Reserve and to facilitate the construction of a Alaska natural gas pipeline to the continental United States to move the product to market. These are only exhortations, but I see no objection to their inclusion in the legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I do not think this bill is a comprehensive solution toward solving our dangerous dependence on foreign oil. Nor does it come close to addressing all that we must do on energy policy.

We need to do more.

We can look for ways to increase exploration in offshore areas—for example, in 2006 I proposed opening up part of the eastern Gulf of Mexico to within 100 miles of the Florida coast, rather than leave the 125-mile buffer that was finally enacted, and I think that additional acreage should be made available. We should adjust the tax on imported ethanol, and I have introduced to reduce an artificial trade barrier that discourages imports of that fuel. We need to aggressively pursue development of alternative energy sources, including solar and wind power, and we should move aggressively to support research in carbon sequestration for clean coal development, and review policies that inhibit a more proactive effort with nuclear power. And we also need to work even harder to increase energy efficiency, so that we get a greater payoff from all energy sources.

In short, we need a comprehensive and balanced energy policy. This bill by itself is at best a small part of that prescription—but, modest as it is, it does deserve approval and I will vote for it.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this legislation, which fails to open up any new lands anywhere to American energy exploration and production. Worse still, this bill imposes restrictive labor requirements including Project Labor Agreements, which eliminate open competition and increase the cost of projects.

A PLA is a labor agreement that requires all contractors working on a site to agree to certain working conditions. If a non-union company is interested in work on a construction site covered by a PLA, these companies will very likely be forced to hire union labor, despite their already having a competent workforce in place.

Why? Well, supporters of these restrictive requirements claim that they are necessary to protect workers' wages.

So here we are, with another "no new American-made energy" bill, but now the majority is claiming to be protecting workers' wages. Forgive me, but it's hard to take this bill seriously.

One of the biggest drains on workers' wages is the high price at the pump. Today, the price of a gallon of regular unleaded stands at \$4.11. A gallon of diesel costs \$4.85.

Low-income workers are disproportionately harmed by high energy costs. If this bill was serious about protecting workers' wages, it would open new areas for exploration, it would promote the development of new sources of American-made energy.

Instead, we're seeing the same tired, old rhetoric from the other side. We're seeing the same stubborn refusal to embrace a comprehensive energy agenda that includes the development of new American-made energy sources, the expansion of alternative fuels, and the promotion of conservation.

This bill does nothing to offer workers the relief they need, and I strongly oppose its passage.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, today is yet another sad day for the American peo-

ple—real people who are suffering from \$4-plus pain at the pump and the Democrat Majority's refusal to do anything about it.

This bill is nothing more than a feeble attempt to fool the American people into believing that the Democratic leadership in Congress actually supports more drilling. They don't. The Democrats in Congress have a well documented, 30 year history of opposing more drilling. In fact, just last year, the very same Democrat leaders in this body who now say they support more drilling were arguing that oil companies were drilling too much and too quickly.

And let me remind Members that in the first 100 hours of the Democrat's Majority's "new direction" for American energy, they attempted to limit and slow down energy production in the National Petroleum Reserve—Alaska (NPR—A) by undoing the provisions Republicans enacted into law in 2005 that would have expedited more drilling in NPR—A.

This bill is a sham. It will not produce one drop of American-made oil or natural gas. In fact, there is more drilling in my dentist's office than in this bill.

For the record, here are the facts about drilling in NPR—A:

All lands in NPR—A that are available to be leased under current Bureau of Land Management planning documents have been offered for lease in the past, are currently leased, or are available to be leased now.

If the Democrats want to open all of NPR—A for production, they'll have to exempt the 24 million-acre area from the National Environmental Policy Act and do other environmental laws. And if they wanted to produce more oil, they'd do something to address the multiple environmental lawsuits that have slowed/stopped production in NPR—A.

Both industry and the Department of the Interior say the Bureau of Land Management has enough authority to do lease sales and the agency can do them every year if they want—the Democrats' bill won't do anything new.

Both industry and Interior say the only impediment to more production is environmental lawsuits, and this bill doesn't touch that. In fact, the "use it or lose it" parts of the bill create new litigation that will hold up leasing in NPR—A.

This legislation is yet another unfortunate example of the Democrat leadership's negligence on producing energy. For the last 30 years they have thrown every obstacle they could in the way of producing more oil and gas for consumers.

It's interesting, however, that the Democrat Leadership is arguing that oil companies must ravage the 24 million-acre NPR—A—an area 20 percent larger than ANWR—for its 10.6 billion barrels of oil.

Are we to "extrapolate" that the Speaker and the Majority Leader now support allowing Americans to tap the same amount of oil from just 2000 acres of the 19 million-acre Coastal Plain of ANWR?

The Coastal Plain of ANWR, a flat, frozen desert just 74 miles east of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, is just 1.5 million acres—1/16th the size of NPR—A. It contains the same amount of oil. And with today's technology we can produce all of that oil while disturbing no more than 2000 acres, or 0.01 of ANWR's 19 million acres.

If the Majority leadership sincerely wants more oil, surely they would support drilling in

ANWR, the environmentally friendly alternative to NPR—A. But no, they don't. And this fact should serve as a reminder of the Majority's real energy policy: No more drilling.

I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this do-nothing legislation.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6515.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Evidently a quorum is not present.

The Sergeant at Arms will notify absent Members.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 244, nays 173, not voting 18, as follows:

[Roll No. 511]

YEAS—244

Ackerman	Diaz-Balart, M.	Kildee
Allen	Dicks	Kilpatrick
Altmire	Dingell	Kind
Arcuri	Doggett	Klein (FL)
Baca	Donnelly	Knollenberg
Baird	Doyle	Kucinich
Baldwin	Edwards (MD)	Kuhl (NY)
Barrow	Edwards (TX)	Langevin
Bean	Ellison	Larsen (WA)
Becerra	Ellsworth	Larson (CT)
Berkley	Emanuel	Lee
Berman	Engel	Levin
Berry	English (PA)	Lewis (GA)
Biggert	Eshoo	Lipinski
Bishop (GA)	Etheridge	LoBiondo
Bishop (NY)	Farr	Loehsack
Blumenauer	Fattah	Lofgren, Zoe
Boucher	Filner	Lowe
Boyd (FL)	Forbes	Lynch
Boyda (KS)	Foster	Mahoney (FL)
Brady (PA)	Frank (MA)	Maloney (NY)
Bralley (IA)	Gerlach	Markey
Brown, Corrine	Giffords	Marshall
Buchanan	Gillibrand	Matheson
Butterfield	Goode	Matsui
Capps	Gordon	McCarthy (NY)
Capuano	Graves	McCollum (MN)
Cardoza	Green, Al	McDermott
Carnahan	Grijalva	McGovern
Carney	Gutierrez	McIntyre
Carson	Hall (NY)	McNerney
Castle	Hare	Meek (FL)
Castor	Harman	Meeks (NY)
Cazayoux	Hastings (FL)	Melancon
Chabot	Hayes	Michaud
Chandler	Herseth Sandlin	Miller (NC)
Childers	Higgins	Miller, George
Clarke	Hill	Mitchell
Clay	Hinchey	Mollohan
Cleaver	Hirono	Moore (KS)
Clyburn	Hodes	Moore (WI)
Cohen	Holden	Moran (VA)
Conyers	Holt	Murphy (CT)
Cooper	Honda	Murphy, Patrick
Costello	Hoolley	Murphy, Tim
Courtney	Hoyer	Murtha
Cramer	Inlee	Nadler
Crowley	Israel	Napolitano
Cummings	Jackson (IL)	Neal (MA)
Davis (AL)	Jackson-Lee	Oberstar
Davis (CA)	(TX)	Obey
Davis (IL)	Jefferson	Olver
Davis, Lincoln	Johnson (GA)	Pallone
DeFazio	Johnson, E. B.	Pascarell
DeGette	Jones (NC)	Pastor
Delahunt	Jones (OH)	Payne
DeLauro	Kagen	Pelosi
Dent	Kanjorski	Perlmutter
Diaz-Balart, L.	Kennedy	Peterson (MN)

Pomeroy  
Porter  
Price (NC)  
Rahall  
Ramstad  
Rangel  
Reichert  
Richardson  
Rogers (AL)  
Ros-Lehtinen  
Ross  
Rothman  
Roybal-Allard  
Ryan (OH)  
Salazar  
Sánchez, Linda  
T.  
Sarbanes  
Schakowsky  
Schiff  
Schwartz  
Scott (GA)  
Scott (VA)  
Serrano

Sestak  
Shays  
Shea-Porter  
Sherman  
Shuler  
Sires  
Skelton  
Slaughter  
Smith (NJ)  
Smith (WA)  
Snyder  
Solis  
Space  
Speier  
Spratt  
Stark  
Stupak  
Sutton  
Tanner  
Tauscher  
Taylor  
Thompson (CA)  
Thompson (MS)  
Tierney

Towns  
Tsongas  
Udall (CO)  
Udall (NM)  
Van Hollen  
Velázquez  
Visclosky  
Walz (MN)  
Wamp  
Wasserman  
Schultz  
Waters  
Watson  
Watt  
Waxman  
Weiner  
Welch (VT)  
Wexler  
Wilson (OH)  
Woolsey  
Wu  
Yarmuth

## NAYS—173

Abercrombie  
Aderholt  
Akin  
Alexander  
Bachmann  
Bachus  
Barrett (SC)  
Bartlett (MD)  
Barton (TX)  
Billbray  
Bilirakis  
Bishop (UT)  
Blackburn  
Blunt  
Boehner  
Bonner  
Bono Mack  
Boozman  
Boren  
Boustany  
Brady (TX)  
Broun (GA)  
Brown (SC)  
Burgess  
Burton (IN)  
Buyer  
Calvert  
Camp (MI)  
Campbell (CA)  
Cannon  
Cantor  
Capito  
Carter  
Coble  
Cole (OK)  
Conaway  
Costa  
Crenshaw  
Cuellar  
Culberson  
Davis (KY)  
Davis, David  
Davis, Tom  
Deal (GA)  
Drake  
Dreier  
Duncan  
Ehlers  
Emerson  
Everett  
Fallin  
Feeney  
Ferguson  
Flake  
Fortenberry  
Fossella  
Foxy  
Franks (AZ)  
Frelinghuysen

## NOT VOTING—18

Andrews  
Boswell  
Brown-Waite,  
Ginny  
Cubin  
Doolittle  
Gilchrest

Heger  
Hunter  
Kaptur  
Lucas  
Marchant  
McNulty  
Miller, Gary

Pence  
Peterson (PA)  
Petri  
Pickering  
Pitts  
Platts  
Poe  
Price (GA)  
Pryce (OH)  
Putnam  
Radanovich  
Regula  
Rehberg  
Renzi  
Reyes  
Reynolds  
Rodriguez  
Issa  
Rogers (KY)  
Rogers (MI)  
Rohrabacher  
Roskam  
Royce  
Ryan (WI)  
Sali  
Saxton  
Scalise  
Schmidt  
Sensenbrenner  
Sessions  
Shadegg  
Shimkus  
Shuster  
Simpson  
Smith (NE)  
Smith (TX)  
Souder  
Stearns  
Sullivan  
Tancredo  
Terry  
Thornberry  
Tiahrt  
Tiberi  
Turner  
Upton  
Walberg  
Walden (OR)  
Walsh (NY)  
Weldon (FL)  
Weller  
Westmoreland  
Whitfield (KY)  
Wilson (NM)  
Wilson (SC)  
Wittman (VA)  
Wolf  
Young (FL)

changed their vote from “yea” to “nay.”

So (two-thirds not being in the affirmative) the motion was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated for:

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 511, unfortunately, I am getting a medical procedure done and cannot vote. Had I been present, I would have voted “yea.”

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I was absent from the House of Representatives on July 17, 2008, because I was invited to accompany the President of the United States on a tour of communities in my Northern California Congressional District that have been devastated by wildfires. For this reason, I missed rollcall votes 509, 510, and 511. Had I been present, I would have voted in the following manner: Rollcall 509, on ordering the previous question on H. Res. 1350—“nay”; rollcall 510, on agreeing to H. Res. 1350, providing for consideration of motions to suspend the rules—“no”; rollcall 511, on motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 6515, the Drill Responsibly in Leased Lands Act of 2008—“nay.”

## REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 2125 AND H.R. 1650

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my name be removed from two bills, H.R. 2125 and H.R. 1650.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WALZ of Minnesota). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

## REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 2488

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to remove my name from a bill, H.R. 2488.

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

There was no objection.

## LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

(Mr. BLUNT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BLUNT. I would like to ask my friend, the majority leader, to give us an update on what he plans to bring to the floor next week.

I would yield.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the Republican whip for yielding. On Monday, the House will meet in pro forma session at 12:30 p.m.

On Tuesday, the House will meet at 12:30 p.m. for morning hour and 2 p.m. for legislative business with votes postponed until 6:30 p.m.

On Wednesday and Thursday, the House will meet at 10 a.m. for legislative business. On Friday the House will meet at 9 a.m. for legislative business.

We will consider several bills under suspension of the rules. A complete list of suspensions will be announced by the close of business tomorrow.

In addition, we will consider H.R. 3999, the National Highway Bridge Reconstruction and Inspection Act and H.R. 5501 the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008.

We will also consider legislation to address the housing crisis, H.R. 3221, the American Housing Rescue and Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2008. Finally, we may also consider additional energy-related legislation.

Mr. BLUNT. On the topic of additional energy-related legislation, I know we just had a bill on the floor on energy. It was a heated debate. And while a majority voted for the bill, it didn't pass. I wonder if there is any opportunity that bill might come back next week with a rule.

Mr. HOYER. We have not discussed that yet. We regret it, of course, that it didn't pass. But having said that, I'm sure there will be discussions as to what the next steps will be. But I am not prepared to announce what they will be, mainly because I'm not sure what they will be at this point in time. But we are still very interested in the proposition, as you know, that that legislation spoke to, and that is providing an accelerated exploration, discovery and exploitation of our energy here in the United States, drilling in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska, building a line to get not only the oil, but also natural gas down to the lower 48, and to ensure that companies aren't inventorying property on which either they or others might be producing energy for America.

So we believe the provisions of that bill are important. And I would think that we're going to be looking at ways in which we may move forward on that. But it has not been decided.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank the gentleman for that. As you mentioned, there is lots of interest in the bill. I appreciate the fact that we were able to extend debate, even on a suspension bill. But I think this is a topic where certainly both sides evidenced a willingness to discuss it. And we need to do that. And I would hope to see more energy legislation on the floor and would hope to have it under a rule if that is at all possible.

On appropriations, last week I mentioned that the chairman, the appropriations chairman, had appeared to announce that there would be no appropriations work on the floor. Your comment at the time, if I recall, was that that had not been a decision that you and the other leaders had made yet.

Today, the Speaker announced that the House would consider the Defense bill before October. I'm wondering if you have any idea when that might happen and if there is a chance that

□ 1516

Messrs. RADANOVICH, MCHENRY, FOSSELLA and Mrs. SCHMIDT