

111TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

S. RES. 608

Expressing the sense of the Senate that the Secretary of the Interior should take immediate action to expedite the review and appropriate approval of applications for shallow water drilling permits in the Gulf of Mexico, the Beaufort Sea, and the Chukchi Sea.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

AUGUST 5, 2010

Mrs. HUTCHISON (for herself, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. WICKER, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. VITTER, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. BEGICH, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Mr. SHELBY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Senate that the Secretary of the Interior should take immediate action to expedite the review and appropriate approval of applications for shallow water drilling permits in the Gulf of Mexico, the Beaufort Sea, and the Chukchi Sea.

Whereas, on May 6, 2010, in response to the oil spill from the mobile offshore drilling unit Deepwater Horizon, and without prior public review or notice, the Secretary of the Interior announced an immediate moratorium on the approval of all offshore oil and gas drilling permits until an offshore safety review was completed;

Whereas, on May 28, 2010, following a Department of the Interior safety review, and with the support of many members of the Senate, the President lifted the offshore moratorium for shallow water drilling operations for those drilling rigs or platforms equipped with blowout prevention equipment located above the water surface;

Whereas, on June 2, 2010, the Secretary of the Interior confirmed in a press release that the shallow water drilling moratorium was lifted, but that such drilling operations must “satisfy new safety and environmental requirements”;

Whereas, on June 3, 2010, the President publicly stated that “the [offshore drilling] moratorium has not extended to the shallow waters”;

Whereas, on June 8 and June 18, 2010, the Secretary of the Interior issued documents entitled “Notice to Lessees 05 and 06” (referred to in this preamble as “NTL-05” and “NTL-06”, respectively) imposing new safety and environmental requirements applicable to the filings for new drilling permits, exploration plans, or development plans;

Whereas, as of July 14, 2010, the Secretary of the Interior has not provided adequate guidance and information for the shallow water drilling industry to comply with new drilling application requirements imposed by NTL-06;

Whereas approximately 35 percent of the available shallow water drilling rigs in the Gulf of Mexico are now without work and idle, putting thousands of jobs at risk and affecting the orderly production of domestic natural gas resources in the Gulf Coast;

Whereas more than 25,000 jobs are at risk if the Secretary of the Interior does not continue to issue any new shallow water permits and existing permits expire;

Whereas every Gulf of Mexico shallow water operation provides approximately 500 direct and indirect jobs;

Whereas the failure to approve the final Application for Permit to Drill for 3 exploration wells in the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas in 2010 represents a loss of 600 jobs and harms oil and natural gas exploration critical to the national energy infrastructure; and

Whereas the lack of guidance from the Secretary of the Interior regarding new safety regulations has resulted in only 1 new shallow water permit being granted since May 6, 2010: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

2 (1) national energy security and the regional
3 Gulf Coast economy depend upon the full and immediate
4 restoration of shallow water drilling operations
5 in the Gulf of Mexico;

6 (2) the long-term economic health of the State
7 of Alaska depends upon the responsible development
8 of the oil and natural gas reserves of the Beaufort
9 and Chukchi Seas; and

10 (3) the Secretary of the Interior should—

11 (A) provide written guidance and clarification
12 to applicants regarding new safety requirements; and
13

1 (B) take immediate and effective action to
2 expedite the review and appropriate approval of
3 applications for shallow water drilling permits
4 in the outer Continental Shelf.

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