

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 5616

To require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct certain offshore lease sales.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 21, 2023

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana (for himself, Mr. SCALISE, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. ELLZEY, and Mr. EZELL) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct certain offshore lease sales.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Bringing Reliable In-
5 vestment into Domestic Gulf Energy Production Act of
6 2023” or the “BRIDGE Production Act of 2023”.

7 **SEC. 2. OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS LEASE SALES.**

8 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

9 (1) OFFSHORE LEASE SALE.—The term “off-
10 shore lease sale” means an oil and gas lease sale—

1 (A) that is held by the Secretary in accord-
2 ance with the Outer Continental Shelf Lands
3 Act (43 U.S.C. 1331 et seq.), notwithstanding
4 the requirements of section 18 of that Act (43
5 U.S.C. 1344);

6 (B) offers the same lease form, lease
7 terms, economic conditions, and stipulations as
8 contained in the final notice of sale entitled
9 “Gulf of Mexico Outer Continental Shelf Oil
10 and Gas Lease Sale 257” (86 Fed. Reg. 54728
11 (October 4, 2021)); and

12 (C) that, if any acceptable bids have been
13 received for any tract offered in the lease sale,
14 results in the issuance of leases within 90 days
15 of the sale to the highest bids on the tracts of-
16 fered, subject to the Bureau of Ocean Energy
17 Management “Summary of Procedures for De-
18 termining Bid Adequacy at Offshore Oil and
19 Gas Lease Sales Effective March 2016, with
20 Central Gulf of Mexico Sale 241 and Eastern
21 Gulf of Mexico Sale 226”.

22 (2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
23 the Secretary of the Interior.

24 (b) WAIVER.—The Secretary may waive any other re-
25 quirements under section 18 of the Outer Continental

1 Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1344) that would delay final
2 approval of an offshore lease sale under subsection (c).

3 (c) REQUIREMENT.—Notwithstanding section 18 of
4 the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1344),
5 the Secretary shall—

6 (1) conduct not fewer than 4 offshore lease
7 sales during the 2-year period beginning on the date
8 of enactment of this Act; and

9 (2) ensure that the 2017–2022 Outer Conti-
10 nental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program Final
11 Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement and
12 Record of Decision shall apply to lease sales con-
13 ducted under this subsection and shall be sufficient
14 for purposes of complying with the National Envi-
15 ronmental Policy Act for offshore lease sales con-
16 ducted under this subsection to the extent it does
17 not conflict with this Act.

18 (d) TIMING.—In conducting the offshore lease sales
19 required under subsection (c), the Secretary shall conduct
20 an offshore lease sale not later than—

- 21 (1) March 31, 2024;
22 (2) August 31, 2024;
23 (3) March 31, 2025; and
24 (4) August 31, 2025.

25 (e) AREA OFFERED FOR LEASE.—

1 (1) ACREAGE.—The Secretary shall offer not
2 fewer than 80,000,000 acres for each offshore lease
3 sale conducted under subsection (c).

4 (2) LOCATION.—An offshore lease sale con-
5 ducted under subsection (c) shall be in the Gulf of
6 Mexico Region Program Area as identified in Figure
7 S–1 of the 2017–2022 Outer Continental Shelf Oil
8 and Gas Leasing Proposed Final Program published
9 on November 18, 2016, by the Bureau of Ocean En-
10 ergy Management (as announced in the notice of
11 availability of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Manage-
12 ment entitled “Notice of Availability of the 2017–
13 2022 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing
14 Proposed Final Program” (81 Fed. Reg. 84612 (No-
15 vember 23, 2016))).

16 (f) EFFECT OF LITIGATION.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—A civil action challenging an
18 offshore lease sale conducted under this section shall
19 not—

20 (A) affect the validity of any lease issued
21 under such an offshore lease sale; and

22 (B) except as provided in paragraph
23 (3)(B), cause a delay in the timelines for the
24 consideration of any exploration plan, develop-
25 ment plan, development operations coordination

document, applications for permit to drill, or other application for a Federal agency authorization or approval for activities on a lease issued under such an offshore lease sale.

(2) REMAND; PROCESSING OF APPROVALS AND APPLICATIONS.—If, in a civil action described in paragraph (1), a court finds that the offshore lease sale was not carried out in compliance with Federal law—

(A) the court shall not—

(i) set aside, vacate, or enjoin the offshore lease sale;

(ii) set aside, vacate, or enjoin the leases issued pursuant to the offshore lease sale; or

(iii) enjoin the Secretary from issuing leases to the highest bidders in the challenged offshore lease sale;

(B) the court shall remand the matter to the Secretary and require the Secretary to correct the noncompliance; and

(C) the Secretary shall continue to process all exploration plans, development plans, development operations coordination documents, applications for a permit to drill, and other appli-

1 cations for a Federal agency authorization or
2 other approval for activities requested under
3 any lease issued under the challenged offshore
4 lease sale in accordance with the Outer Conti-
5 nental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1331 et
6 seq.).

7 (3) NOTICE.—

8 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 10 days
9 after the date on which a civil action described
10 in paragraph (1) is served on the United
11 States, the Secretary shall notify the holder of
12 any lease issued, or apparent high bidder if the
13 lease has not yet been issued, under the off-
14 shore lease sale that is the subject of the civil
15 action of the filing of the civil action.

16 (B) TIMELINE.—Not later than 90 days
17 after the date of receipt of a notice under sub-
18 paragraph (A), the holder of the lease may file
19 with the Secretary, and the Secretary may ap-
20 prove, a request to pause the timeline with re-
21 spect to the term of the lease during any period
22 in which the civil action is pending.

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