

we can in Congress to lower the price of gasoline. We do that by increasing production. The two go together. We don't do it by increasing taxes on the energy producers. We allow for policies to allow for more production.

We have to pass H.R. 1229 to make sure that, whether it is deliberate or not, this administration will not continue to stonewall the permitting process. It is a long and lengthy process. There are multiple environmental reviews that take place. Then to hold it up at the last and not allow for a permit to be issued is just not acceptable. All the work has been done when it becomes time to issue the permit.

So what this bill says is you have 30 days, with a couple of extensions, if necessary, to make the final decision. And you don't have to issue the permit. You can say no, if that is the best decision. Just take action, and let's have a little certainty in the business world and in the economy of our country, especially the Gulf of Mexico and the coastal States like Louisiana that are so heavily affected.

On the issue of safety, Mr. Chairman, we all do share the goal of wanting to make sure that offshore drilling is the safest in the world. Significant and fundamental changes have taken place over the past year to improve offshore drilling safety and response. Regulations have been enhanced and strengthened, standards have been increased, new technology has been developed, reviewed, tested and is being currently deployed.

BOEMRE Director Michael Bromwich came to our committee and testified in front of the Natural Resources Committee and he said, "We have confidence that offshore drilling can be conducted now more safely than it had been before and that we would be better able to deal with a blowout than we were before."

Now, if anyone on the other side of the aisle wants to act as if nothing has been changed and there have been no safety reforms imposed, they are indicting the Obama administration in saying that they have turned a blind eye to the situation since the BP crisis took place, and that is simply not true. As I said a minute ago, new regulations have been imposed and standards have been strengthened. So I am not going to sit here and indict the administration on the safety aspect. There have been a lot of safety regulations by bureaucratic regulation put into place.

This bill does acknowledge that two additional things will be part of our law when this bill passes. H.R. 1229 says, number one, the Secretary will issue a permit. The need for a permit has not been ever codified, so we are requiring that a permit has to be issued before drilling can take place. Number two, the Secretary is to conduct a safety review. That is being mandated and put into law.

Mr. Chairman, I would urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 1229. We are going to be looking at some amendments shortly.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Chair, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1229, the Putting the Gulf Back to Work Act, and I thank Natural Resources Committee Chairman HASTINGS for yielding me time.

At a time when hardworking Georgians are paying \$3.88 per gallon at the pump, it is critically important that we enact commonsense energy production policies to reduce our dependence on foreign oil and create jobs. Unfortunately, the Obama Administration has adopted policies that have stifled energy production in this country, and have led to 12,000 jobs lost during the moratorium imposed in the Gulf of Mexico last year.

Mr. Chair, H.R. 1229 will end the ongoing "de facto" moratorium caused by the White House's refusal to approve permits in the Gulf by requiring the Department of the Interior to grant permits for exploration of oil and natural gas. This commonsense legislation will create thousands of jobs, help recapture \$4.7 million that the Federal Government is losing on a daily basis from a lack of energy production, and will lead us to greater energy independence.

I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 1229.

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Chair, I rise today to voice my strong opposition to H.R. 1229 and H.R. 1230.

In April 2010, our Nation watched as millions of gallons of oil spilled into the Gulf of Mexico from an oil drilling rig off the coast of Louisiana. We saw photos of the disaster that ensued, the impact on our environment (including the damage caused to marine and coastal wildlife) and the devastating economic impact on communities in the Gulf Coast region. From the loss of fishing jobs and revenue from tourism to the harm of biodiversity in fragile wetland ecosystems and marine life breeding grounds, this oil spill caused immense destruction to a resource rich area.

I am concerned that without changes to the offshore drilling industry standards, a disaster like the Deepwater Horizon explosion of April 2010 could happen again. Today, the majority in the House is asking us to pass H.R. 1229 and to forget about the tragic events of last April and the inadequacies of our national energy policy in order to grant Big Oil access to the Gulf with less oversight—rushing lease sales in the Gulf of Mexico at an unprecedented pace and without proper environmental review. This bill is not only ill-advised, but it is unnecessary as well because the Obama Administration is already moving forward with the lease sales in the Gulf of Mexico with added reviews to ensure sound safety and environmental protections.

In addition, H.R. 1230 would require the Interior Department to hold additional lease sales in the Gulf of Mexico over the next 4 to 8 months and open the eastern seaboard for drilling by requiring a lease sale off the coast of Virginia this year. This bill would require the Interior Department to rely on environmental reviews for these areas done by the Bush Administration prior to the Deepwater Horizon disaster, with many of the same demonstrably flawed and dangerous assumptions and inadequate review processes as the BP lease that led to the disastrous spill in April 2010. The majority in Congress is using rising gasoline prices as an excuse to grant large, multi-national energy companies greater access to even more of our precious shores, including

on the Atlantic Coast which could affect New Jersey in the event of a spill.

I believe opening our coastal waters and protected wilderness areas to oil drilling is harmful, ineffective, and a step in the wrong direction that will damage our environment. We are currently drilling at a higher rate than we ever have and onshore production increased by 5% in 2010. Production in the Gulf of Mexico is at an all time high. Yet, of the 41 million acres of public lands now leased for oil and gas development, just 12 million acres are producing. Offshore, 38 million acres of the outer continental shelf are leased for oil and gas drilling, but just 6.5 million acres are producing. We have approved drilling leases on land where no drilling is taking place; the potential for higher production is there without expanding leasing to environmentally sensitive wildlife refuges or populated shore regions.

Moreover, the proposed drilling will not significantly lower gas prices. According to a 2009 study from the Energy Information Administration, opening up waters that are currently closed to drilling off the East Coast, West Coast and the Gulf coast of Florida would yield an extra 500,000 barrels a day by 2030, meaning that gas prices might drop a total of 3 cents a gallon. And that is years away. In the meantime, Big Oil companies continue to rake in record profits while taxpayers subsidize their costs. The American people have had enough, New Jersey has had enough and I have had enough. We need to stop Big Oil subsidies and explore alternatives.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. All time for general debate has expired.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LANDRY) having assumed the chair, Mr. WOMACK, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1229) to amend the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act to facilitate the safe and timely production of American energy resources from the Gulf of Mexico, had come to no resolution thereon.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on the motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record vote on the postponed question will be taken after 6:30 p.m. today.

#### ASSESSING PROGRESS IN HAITI ACT

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1016) to measure the progress of relief, recovery, reconstruction, and