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Natural Resources Committee Unanimously Approves Creation of Non-Partisan, National Oil Spill Commission

Bipartisan House Action Mirrors Senate Committee Action

WASHINGTON D.C. – Today, in a Full Committee markup of the CLEAR Act (H.R. 3534), the House Natural Resources Committee voted in favor of a Republican amendment to establish a non-partisan, independent Congressionally approved National Commission on Outer Continental Shelf Oil Spill Prevention to study the events leading up to the Deepwater Horizon disaster. The amendment, offered by Rep. Bill Cassidy (LA-06) is identical to an amendment by Senator John Barrasso that was recently approved by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

*"It is vital that our response to the spill be guided by facts, not politics or ideology," said **Cassidy**. "If our common ground is that we want to determine the facts surrounding the disaster in the Gulf, we should have people serving on the commission who are experts in the field. This is identical to an amendment agreed to in the Senate and I'm glad that this House Committee has come to the same bipartisan agreement."*

*"With the approval of this amendment, both House and Senate committees have agreed, on a bipartisan basis, that a non-partisan oil spill commission is needed to fill the holes left by the Presidential Commission," said **Ranking Member Hastings**. "Just like the 9/11 Commission or others created after national disasters, the commission created by this amendment will have a fair and balanced panel of specific experts that have knowledge on the unique matters surrounding deepwater drilling and oil spill prevention and recovery."*

Background

Committees in the both the House and the Senate have now supported the establishment of an independent, non-partisan oil spill commission. This comes as numerous questions are being raised about President Obama's National Oil Spill Commission:

"Mr. Obama filled out his commission last week, and the news is that there's neither an oil nor drilling expert in the bunch. Instead, he's loaded up on politicians and environmental activists." ([Wall Street Journal, 6/21/10](#))

"The panel appointed by President Barack Obama to investigate the Gulf of Mexico oil spill is short on technical experts but long on talking publically about 'America's addiction to oil.' ...Only one of the seven commissions, the dean of Harvard's

engineering and applied sciences school, has a prominent engineering background – but it's in optics and physics.” ([AP, 6/20/10](#))

The House and Senate approved amendment directs Congress to establish a non-partisan Commission to examine and report on the causes of the Deepwater Horizon incident and subsequent oil spill and make recommendations to ensure America's offshore energy exploration is the safest in the world.

The 10-member Commission will be appointed equally by Congressional leadership of both parties, with the Chairperson appointed by the President. The amendment provides that the Commission should be comprised of experts in the fields of engineering, environmental compliance, health and safety laws, oil spill insurance, public administration, oil and gas exploration and production, environmental cleanup, and fisheries and wildlife management. The Commission will provide its final report within 180 days.

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