



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, April 13, 2011

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Markup Update #1: Natural Resources Committee Passes Bill (H.R. 1229) to Put the Gulf Back to Work, Address Rising Gasoline Prices

WASHINGTON, DC – The House Natural Resources Committee this morning passed H.R. 1229, the *Putting the Gulf Back to Work Act*, by a bipartisan vote of 27 to 16. This bill ends the Administration's *de facto* moratorium in the Gulf of Mexico in a responsible, transparent manner by reforming current law to improve safety and setting firm time-lines for considering permits to drill.

"With the passage of this bill, Republicans are taking specific action to address rising gasoline prices. This is the first of three bills being considered to expand American energy production in order to create jobs and lower energy costs," said Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04). "It's been nearly six months since the Obama Administration officially ended the moratorium on deepwater drilling, and yet thousands of people in the Gulf remain out of work. This bill allows drilling to resume in a safe manner and provides certainty to businesses by implementing firm timelines for the Interior Department to act on permits. This bill ensures that endless bureaucratic delays and non-answers will no longer be tolerated."

H.R. 1229 includes reforms to current law to improve the safety of all offshore drilling. It requires the lease holders to receive an approved permit to drill before drilling an offshore well. Currently, such a permit is not required by federal law, only by regulation. This reform applies to the Gulf of Mexico and all offshore drilling in federal waters. This is a recommendation of the President's handpicked oil spill commission.

The bill further reforms the law to specifically require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a safety review to ensure that proposed drilling operations "meet all critical safety system requirements, including blowout prevention, and oil spill response and containment requirements."

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