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Democrats Vote to Use Oil Spill as Excuse for over \$40 Billion in Higher Spending

New Mandatory Spending is unrelated to Gulf spill

WASHINGTON D.C. – Although the Clear Act (H.R. 3534) is being advertised as a bill to establish new laws and regulations in response to the Deepwater Horizon spill, the Democrat majority is using it as a vehicle to push through **nearly \$1.5 billion dollars a year in unrelated spending, for a total of over \$40 billion in new mandatory spending.**

Democrats today voted against (16 to 25) an amendment by Rep. Jason Chaffetz (UT-03) to eliminate this new mandatory, unrelated spending. [Click here to view the roll call.](#)

Democrats also rejected (20 to 25) an amendment by Rep. Chaffetz to ban earmarking of these funds – thereby creating a nearly \$1.5 billion per year earmark slush fund that's unrelated to the oil spill. [Click here to view the roll call.](#)

“This tragic oil spill should not be exploited to feed Democrats’ unending appetite for more spending and higher deficits,” said Rep. Chaffetz. “This bill automatically spends roughly \$41 billion over 30 years – without further Congressional approval – on items that are completely unrelated to the spill. As our country runs record deficits, and the people of the Gulf Coast struggle to make ends meet, it is morally and fiscally irresponsible to spend over a billion dollars a year on future land purchases for the federal government. Our children and grandchildren can’t afford this and neither can families and businesses in the Gulf.”

“Leave it to Congress to masquerade billions in pork barrel spending as an oil spill cleanup bill,” said Ranking Member Hastings. “This \$40 billion in mandatory spending is like an ATM that automatically hands out nearly \$1.5 billion a year for the next 30 years. With the federal government already facing a whopping \$1 trillion deficit, our country cannot afford this new spending that will not even be used to help the people and businesses in the Gulf recover from the oil spill.”

Background

The bill includes the following unrelated spending provisions:

- **\$900,000,000 for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).** The bill extends authorization of the LWCF for the next 30 years at \$900 million per year –

without further Congressional consideration. That is a 190% increase above Fiscal Year 2011 spending levels. The primary purpose of the LWCF is to purchase more federal land and help maintain current National Parks, Forest and Wildlife refuges. Increasing funding for this program has no place in a bill intended to focus on the Gulf oil spill.

- **\$150,000,000 for the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF)**. The bill also includes \$150 million in mandatory, automatic funding per year for the next 30 years for the HPF. The HPF is used to provide grants to states and local communities to preserve historic sites and landmarks.
- **10% of OCS Revenues for New Ocean Resources Conservation and Assistance (ORCA) Fund**. The bill takes 10% of all Outer Continental Shelf revenues to create a new Ocean Resources Conservation Fund – an amount possibly equaling \$50 million per year. This money would be given to the Secretary of the Interior to be used for undefined purposes. The funds would be specifically directed towards the Gulf region and could be applied to all ocean, coastal and Great Lake ecosystems.

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