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## **Democrat Leadership Strips Bipartisan, Independent Oil Spill Commission from CLEAR Act**

**WASHINGTON D.C.** – In the latest version of the CLEAR Act unveiled Monday night, House Democrats have deleted a provision offered by Rep. Bill Cassidy (LA-06) to establish a bipartisan, independent, National Commission on Outer Continental Shelf Oil Spill Prevention, comprised of technical experts to study the events leading up to the Deepwater Horizon disaster. This Amendment [passed out](#) of Natural Resources Committee with bipartisan support and not a single member of the Committee voiced any opposition at the July 14<sup>th</sup> Committee markup.

The Commission is identical to one that [passed with bipartisan support](#) out of the Senate's Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

In the July 14<sup>th</sup> markup, Natural Resources Committee Chairman Nick Rahall (D-WV) said he was "prepared to...accept the amendment [offered by Rep. Cassidy]." Today, Chairman Rahall [changed his tune](#) and defended deletion of the bipartisan, independent spill commission:

*"We felt there were already too many other commissions and decided we wanted to strengthen the independent commission that seemed to have the most unanimous support and could deliver the most important answer to what went on here."*

Two weeks ago, Chairman Rahall proactively and willingly moved for adoption of the bipartisan commission, but now Chairman Rahall defends the President's unilateral, hand-picked, expert-deficient Commission as "independent" and as having "the most unanimous support."

*"By deleting the bipartisan, independent oil spill commission that's received bipartisan support in both House and Senate Committees, Democrats have shown they are more interested in protecting the President than getting independent answers to what caused this tragic Gulf spill. Some of the biggest failures that contributed to the Gulf disaster are the direct responsibility of the federal government and by deleting this bipartisan, independent Commission, Democrats ensure that only the President's hand-picked Commission will be digging into any failures of his own Interior Department appointees. There is widespread agreement that no member of the President's Commission possesses technical expertise in oil drilling, and several are on the record in opposition to offshore drilling and support a moratorium that will cost thousands of jobs," said Natural Resources Committee Ranking*

## Member Doc Hastings.

*“To investigate what went wrong and keep it from happening again, the commission must include members who have expertise in petroleum engineering. The President’s Commission has none. It defies common sense that this amendment passed unanimously in committee, only to be deleted in the Speaker’s office,”* **said Rep. Bill Cassidy.**

### **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 would 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.

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