



Hot Air Alert

WHEN DEMOCRAT RHETORIC AND REALITY COLLIDE

Wednesday, April 06, 2011

Natural Resource Committee Democrats Make Inaccurate Statements on GOP Energy Bills

House Natural Resources Committee Democrats are making inaccurate statements and claims when describing H.R. 1229, the *Get the Gulf Back to Work Act* H.R. 1231 and the *Reversing President Obama's Offshore Moratorium Act*. Below are just a few of the myths recently purported in a Committee hearing where an economist testified that Chairman Hastings' three offshore energy bills could create [1.2 million American jobs](#).

MYTH: H.R. 1229 would mandate the Department of the Interior to approve offshore drilling permits.

Ranking Member Ed Markey (D-MA): *"...we should not be legislatively mandating that the Interior Department gets only 60 days to approve new drilling permits."*

FACT: H.R. 1229 simply requires the Secretary of the Interior to act within the set period of time – it is not a requirement that permits be approved. This firm timeline will make certain that the Obama Administration cannot impose a moratorium through deliberate inaction and provide applicants half answers requiring repeated resubmissions.

MYTH: H.R. 1229 will make offshore drilling less safe.

Rep. Rush Holt (D-NJ): *"...three bills that could potentially and I would say would likely make offshore drilling less safe."*

FACT: H.R. 1229 will make offshore drilling safer. The bill reforms current law to require lease holders to receive an approved permit to drill before drilling an offshore well. This reform applies to the Gulf of Mexico and all offshore drilling in federal waters. Currently such a permit is not required by federal law, only by regulation. 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."

MYTH: H.R. 1231 would open up the entire California coastline to offshore energy development.

Rep. Holt: *"...this legislation would force the Interior Department to open all of California...to drilling."*

FACT: H.R. 1231 is a drill smart plan that requires the Administration to move forward with drilling in areas containing the greatest known amount of oil and natural gas. For the 2012-2017 leasing plan being written by the Obama Administration, it is specifically defined as those areas containing at least 2.5 billion barrels of oil or 7.5 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. As illustrated in [this map](#), the only portion of California that meets those criteria is the Southern California planning area, estimated to contain nearly [6 billion barrels of recoverable oil](#).

MYTH: H.R. 1229 would give an across the board extension of existing leases.

Rep. Holt: *"H.R. 1229 would give a free ride to companies even if their leases are many years from expiring."*

FACT: H.R. 1229 provides 30 days, with no extension, for the Secretary of the Interior to restart Gulf permits that were approved before the Administration's moratorium was imposed on May 27, 2010. If the Secretary fails to act, the leases will be put into suspension (the clock stops ticking on the time-limited lease) until a decision is made. The bill does not automatically approve the permits and does not automatically reset lease terms.

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