

Congressman Mike Quigley

Statement for the Committee on Rules

Wednesday, May 4, 2011

Chairman Dreier, Ranking Member Slaughter, thank you for offering me the opportunity to testify before you today on behalf of my amendment to H.R. 1229, the *Putting the Gulf of Mexico Back to Work Act*.

Our addiction to fossil fuels has devastating consequences – which have been clearly illustrated in the past year as we've faced cleanup efforts of the Horizon deepwater oil disaster off the Gulf Coast. A cleanup that is still far from over.

We *must* pass legislation that reduces our foreign oil dependence, creates clean energy jobs and strengthens our economy, and protects our national security. We must reduce our oil consumption and address the causes of the BP oil disaster. Furthermore, we must establish a national energy plan – something our great nation has always lacked.

Sadly, H.R. 1229 does none of this important work.

The proponents of H.R. 1229 would have you believe that all we need to do is increase our domestic oil resources and remove regulations – regulations that have purportedly forced us to look outside our nation's borders for oil. But, our answers do not lie in more oil. Nor is the answer to recklessly exploit our natural resources.

Our answers lie in conservation and smart investments.

We do agree that our dependence on foreign oil endangers our environment, hurts our economy and weakens our national security.

It follows, then, that we should agree that in order to lower gas prices we can and must crack down on oil speculators, end big oil handouts, invest in public transit and electric vehicles and increase corporate average fuel economy standards.

My amendment addresses the need to fix broken policies that lead us to the devastation of the Horizon spill in the first place, by amending the policies for oil and gas extraction in the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). First, the measure changes our nation's OCS policy and mandate precaution from a directive that may imply that protection of the environment is secondary to expeditious development. Second, the bill looks to further protect important ecological areas (IEAs) by requiring the Secretary to consider geographical, geological, and ecological characteristics of OCS areas.

We can proactively move our nation toward reducing our dependence on foreign oil so that we can take control of our energy future, protect our nation, our economy and our environment, and we must.

I urge the Committee to accept this important amendment that will protect the environment of the Gulf Coast, and thus the economy and way of life, and our national security.

Our lives, our economic future and our safety depend on it.