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(Original Signature of Member)

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. _____

To amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to improve the comprehensive inventory of Outer Continental Shelf oil and natural gas resources, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. HUNT introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to improve the comprehensive inventory of Outer Continental Shelf oil and natural gas resources, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Comprehensive Off-
5 shore Resource Evaluation Act” or the “CORE Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. COMPREHENSIVE INVENTORY OF OCS OIL AND**
2 **NATURAL GAS RESOURCES.**

3 Section 357 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42
4 U.S.C. 15912) is amended—

5 (1) in subsection (a)(1), by striking “of Mexico
6 and Canada”;

7 (2) by redesignating subsection (b) as sub-
8 section (c);

9 (3) by inserting after subsection (a) the fol-
10 lowing:

11 “(b) INCLUSIONS.—The inventory and analysis con-
12 ducted under subsection (a) shall include the following:

13 “(1) An assessment of the approximate quan-
14 tity of undiscovered resources in each regional plan-
15 ning area as defined by the 2024–2029 National
16 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Pro-
17 posed Final Program of September 29, 2023. In car-
18 rying out such assessment, the Secretary of the Inte-
19 rior shall—

20 “(A) prioritize the acquisition and use of
21 advanced geophysical and geotechnical data;
22 and

23 “(B) to the extent possible, acquire and
24 apply new and emerging modeling and analytic
25 technologies, including data analysis tools,
26 quantum computing, modeling, and geographic

1 information systems, to approximate the quan-
2 tity and establish a peer reviewed range of un-
3 discovered resources in each regional planning
4 area with a discussion of the upper and lower
5 bound of the estimates with that discussion to
6 include recommendations as to how to reduce
7 the range of uncertainty.

8 “(2) An assessment of the approximate effect,
9 if any, the production of undiscovered resources
10 would have on the economy of the United States, in-
11 cluding the price of oil and gas, under two produc-
12 tion scenarios: (1) an accelerated extraction where
13 the undiscovered resources are brought to market si-
14 multaneously, and (2) a phased extraction approach
15 where the resources are produced incrementally over
16 time. This assessment shall take into account mar-
17 ket dynamics, technological advancements, and in-
18 creasing oil and gas market demand projections. In
19 carrying out such assessment, the Secretary of the
20 Interior shall consider the potential economic bene-
21 fits—

22 “(A) associated with all uses of offshore oil
23 and gas production along the value chain, in-
24 cluding the ultimate use of end products by the
25 consumer; and

1 “(B) to the United States as a whole and
2 trade deficit impacts of expanding United
3 States offshore oil and gas production. The Sec-
4 retary may utilize the Energy Information
5 Agencies National Energy Modeling System for
6 aspects of this analysis.

7 “(3) A determination of the approximate net
8 greenhouse gas emission reductions that would occur
9 if the total quantity of oil and gas resources im-
10 ported from foreign countries were replaced with
11 newly produced undiscovered resources from the re-
12 gional planning areas described in paragraph (1). In
13 making such determination, the determination shall
14 only consider, if sufficient data is available to ensure
15 comparable assessment, the greenhouse gas emis-
16 sions associated with a direct comparison between
17 domestic and imported oil and gas resources, includ-
18 ing emissions from exploration, development, produc-
19 tion, and transportation to a common point of deliv-
20 ery.

21 “(4) An identification of alternative sources of
22 energy that communities could rely on if the oil and
23 gas resources assessed under paragraph (1) are not
24 discovered and developed. In making such identifica-
25 tion, the Secretary of the Interior shall compare the

1 costs of such alternatives to the costs of domestic oil
2 and gas resources assessed under paragraph (1).
3 The Secretary may make reasonable assumptions re-
4 garding infrastructure, transport, and related fac-
5 tors based on industry standards and historical data
6 to ensure comprehensive and accurate comparisons
7 under this paragraph. If emissions data or forecasts
8 are unavailable for such oil and gas resources, the
9 Secretary shall assume that—

10 “(A) the production of such oil and gas
11 would falls under the API gravity 37.5 degrees
12 category; and

13 “(B) the mean emissions intensity of such
14 oil and gas is equal to the emissions intensity
15 of offshore gas or methane based on historical
16 United States production as of the 2010.

17 “(5) A comparison of the amount of onshore or
18 offshore land, acreage, and infrastructure required
19 to produce an equivalent amount of energy from re-
20 newable sources (such as solar and wind) compared
21 to oil and gas. In making such comparison, the Sec-
22 retary of the Interior shall highlight any and all of
23 the efficiency, reliability, and lower environmental
24 impact of oil and gas production relative to these al-
25 ternatives.

1 “(6) An identification and assessment of how
2 the unavailability for leasing of land that is with-
3 drawn under section 12 of the Outer Continental
4 Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1341) or part of the
5 National Marine Sanctuary System established by
6 section 301(c) of the National Marine Sanctuaries
7 Act (16 U.S.C. 1431(c)) affects—

8 “(A) the exploration, development, and
9 production of oil and gas;

10 “(B) economic benefits, including with re-
11 spect to—

12 “(i) the stability of the price of oil
13 and gas;

14 “(ii) the amount of revenue States
15 and coastal political subdivisions receive
16 pursuant to section 105 of the Gulf of
17 Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006 (43
18 U.S.C. 1331 note); and

19 “(iii) the ability of the Secretary of
20 Energy to acquire and exchange petroleum
21 products for storage in the Strategic Pe-
22 troleum Reserve;

23 “(C) environmental benefits, including with
24 respect to the amount of greenhouse gas emis-

1 sions that result from the importation of oil and
2 gas; and

3 “(D) national security, including with re-
4 spect to supporting allies and trade partners.

5 “(7) An examination of the feasibility of—

6 “(A) conducting new geophysical seismic
7 surveys for areas—

8 “(i) for which previous surveys of un-
9 discovered resources estimated the undis-
10 covered resource potential to be over 1 bil-
11 lion barrels of oil or 10 trillion cubic feet
12 of gas; and

13 “(ii) in which exploration activities
14 have been limited or have not occurred
15 during the 20 years preceding the date of
16 enactment of the Comprehensive Offshore
17 Resource Evaluation Act; and

18 “(B) acquiring new geophysical seismic
19 data from private firms, other Federal agencies,
20 State agencies, and any other entity that main-
21 tains such data.”;

22 (4) in subsection (c), as so redesignated—

23 (A) by striking “The Secretary shall sub-
24 mit” and inserting “Not later than 180 days

1 after the date of enactment of the CORE Act,
2 the Secretary shall submit”; and

3 (B) by striking “, within 6 months of the
4 date of enactment of the section”; and

5 (5) by adding at the end the following:

6 “(d) UNDISCOVERED RESOURCE DEFINED.—

7 “(1) In this section, the term ‘undiscovered re-
8 source’ means an oil and gas resource postulated, on
9 the basis of geologic knowledge or theory, to exist
10 outside of known fields or accumulations.

11 “(2) UPDATING ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY.—

12 Once every ten years, The Secretary of Interior shall
13 conduct an assessment of the costs, benefits, and ac-
14 curacy of the models utilized by the Bureau of
15 Ocean Energy Management to [conduct resource as-
16 sessments]. In carrying out such assessment, the
17 Secretary of the Interior shall jointly consult with
18 Society of Petroleum Engineers’ Resources and Re-
19 serves Committee, the National Petroleum Council,
20 and also the United States Association for Energy
21 Economics, with respect to recommend new meth-
22 odologies, if deficiencies these groups identified exist
23 in current practices or if potential benefits could be
24 realized from employing new methods of analysis.

25 This assessment shall occur no later than 1 year

1 after enactment of this act and no later than every
2 10 years thereafter. The National Petroleum Council
3 shall lead on the joint consultations with the Sec-
4 retary of Interior.”.

5 **SEC. 3. TRANSBOUNDARY HYDROCARBONS REPORT.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the
7 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in
8 consultation with the Secretary of the Interior and rel-
9 evant stakeholders, shall submit to Congress a report on
10 existing and potential transboundary hydrocarbon res-
11 ervoirs of the Outer Continental Shelf. The report shall
12 include the following:

13 (1) An identification of any existing and poten-
14 tial transboundary hydrocarbon reservoirs, including
15 such reservoirs that are subject to any transbound-
16 ary hydrocarbons agreements, treaties, or other
17 agreements, including—

18 (A) the Agreement Between the United
19 States of America and the Union of Soviet So-
20 cialist Republics on the Maritime Boundary,
21 with Annex, signed at Washington, June 1,
22 1990; and

23 (B) the Treaty between the Government of
24 the United States of America and the Govern-
25 ment of the United Mexican States on the De-

1 limitation of the Continental Shelf in the West-
2 ern Gulf of Mexico beyond 200 nautical miles,
3 signed at Washington on June 9, 2000.

4 (2) An analysis of—

5 (A) the legal frameworks established by
6 such maritime boundary treaties and other
7 agreements, including provisions related to the
8 equitable development of transboundary hydro-
9 carbon resources and mechanisms for resolving
10 disputes; and

11 (B) the adoption of such legal frameworks
12 by foreign countries that are parties to such
13 maritime boundary treaties and other agree-
14 ments.

15 (3) An evaluation of the potential economic, en-
16 vironmental, and geopolitical implications of trans-
17 boundary hydrocarbon development, including im-
18 pacts on domestic energy security and international
19 relations.

20 (4) Recommendations for enhancing coopera-
21 tion and coordination among the United States and
22 neighboring countries in the management and devel-
23 opment of transboundary hydrocarbon resources, in-
24 cluding mechanisms for information sharing, joint
25 exploration, and dispute resolution.

1 (5) To the best extent possible, an assessment
2 of the approximate quantity of undiscovered and dis-
3 covered resources in each transboundary hydro-
4 carbon reservoirs.

5 (b) UNDISCOVERED RESOURCE DEFINED.—In this
6 section, the term “undiscovered resource” means an oil
7 and gas resource postulated, on the basis of geologic
8 knowledge or theory, to exist outside of known fields or
9 accumulations.

10 **SEC. 4. OFFSHORE GEOLOGICAL AND GEOPHYSICAL SUR-**
11 **VEY LICENSING.**

12 (a) INCIDENTAL TAKE REGULATIONS.—Notwith-
13 standing any other provision of law, the National Marine
14 Fisheries Service (NMFS), and National Oceanic and At-
15 mospheric Administration (NOAA) shall maintain inci-
16 dental take regulations under the Marine Mammal Protec-
17 tion Act governing the issuance of Letters of Authoriza-
18 tions for Outer Continental Shelf geophysical and geologi-
19 cal surveys. These regulations shall not expire, nor require
20 renewal every 5 years, but be maintained and updated as
21 necessary through the requirements of the Administrative
22 Procedures Act.

23 (b) Specifically, the incidental take regulations gov-
24 erning Outer Continental Shelf geophysical and geological
25 surveys (section 217 of title 50, Code of Federal Regula-

1 tions) issued by NMFS effective on May 24, 2024 shall
2 not expire on April 19, 2026 and shall remain valid and
3 in effect in perpetuity.

4 (c) The Secretary of the Interior shall authorize geo-
5 logical and geophysical surveys related to oil and gas ac-
6 tivities on the Gulf of Mexico Outer Continental Shelf, ex-
7 cept within areas subject to existing oil and gas leasing
8 moratoria. Such authorizations shall be issued within 30
9 days of receipt of a completed application and shall, as
10 applicable to survey type, comply with the mitigation and
11 monitoring measures in subsections (a), (b), (c), (d), (f),
12 and (g) of section 217.184 of title 50, Code of Federal
13 Regulations (as in effect on January 1, 2022), and section
14 217.185 of title 50, Code of Federal Regulations (as in
15 effect on January 1, 2022). Geological and geophysical
16 surveys authorized pursuant to this section are deemed to
17 be in full compliance with the Marine Mammal Protection
18 Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.) and the Endangered
19 Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), and their
20 implementing regulations.

21 (d) JUDICIAL REVIEW AND ENFORCEMENT.—

22 (1) DISTRICT COURT REVIEW.—A district court
23 shall have no more than 30 days from the date a pe-
24 tition is filed to enforce a decision made under this
25 section.

1 (2) APPEALS COURT REVIEW.—An appeals
2 court shall have no more than 30 days to issue a de-
3 cision on an appeal of a district court’s ruling under
4 this section.

5 (e) REPORTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY.—The Sec-
6 retary concerned shall submit a monthly report to Con-
7 gress detailing the number of permit applications received,
8 the average processing time of such applications, instances
9 of noncompliance with the deadline described in subsection
10 (a).

11 **SEC. 5. EFFECT ON OTHER LAW.**

12 Nothing in this Act shall affect—

13 (1) the Presidential memorandum titled
14 “Memorandum on Withdrawal of Certain Areas of
15 the United States Outer Continental Shelf From
16 Leasing Disposition” and dated September 8, 2020;

17 (2) the Presidential memorandum titled
18 “Memorandum on Withdrawal of Certain Areas of
19 the United States Outer Continental Shelf From
20 Leasing Disposition” and dated September 25,
21 2020;

22 (3) the Presidential memorandum titled
23 “Memorandum on Withdrawal of Certain Areas off
24 the Atlantic Coast on the Outer Continental Shelf

1 From Leasing Disposition” and dated December 20,
2 2016; and
3 (4) the ban on oil and gas development in the
4 Great Lakes under section 386 of the Energy Policy
5 Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 15941).