

**Opening Statement of Rep. Edward J. Markey  
Natural Resources Committee Markup of H.R. 6082  
July 18, 2012**

Thank you.

For the last 18 months, this Committee has reported out one bill after another to turn over our public lands to the oil and gas industry. This Committee has already passed a total of 10 bills intended to open up nearly every last piece of our public lands to drilling and hand even more giveaways to Big Oil.

All in all, the Majority has cast a total of 55 votes in this Committee that benefit the oil and gas industry. They have voted repeatedly to allow drilling off our beaches in California, New Jersey and Florida. They have voted to allow drilling in the crown jewel of our wildlife refuge system, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. They have voted to turn over nearly all of our public lands onshore to the oil industry within a few short years. And they have repeatedly voted *against* putting in place any new safety standards for offshore drilling following the BP spill, against ensuring that oil companies making record profits are paying their fair share to drill on public lands, and against keeping the oil and gas produced from public lands here in America to benefit American consumers.

The Natural Resources Committee alone has brought 5 drilling packages to the Floor. The Majority has cast 60 votes on the Floor on bills within this Committee's jurisdiction to aid the oil and gas industry. We have spent more than 33 hours on the Floor debating the drilling bills reported by this Committee. And all of these bills have suffered the same fate. They were all far too extreme to pass the Senate and not a single one has been signed into law.

It reportedly costs \$24 million a week to keep the House in session. That means that we have cost taxpayers more than \$20 million debating drilling bills from this Committee that had no chance of ever becoming law. And yet here we are again today, considering the 11<sup>th</sup> drilling bill this Committee will have passed this Congress. And – spoiler alert -- I don't think the 11<sup>th</sup> time is going to be the charm.

Under the GOP, this isn't the House of Representatives, it's the House of Repetitives.

The 80<sup>th</sup> Congress was famously dubbed the “do nothing Congress” by President Harry Truman. This is apparently the “do the same thing over and over Congress.” And so, if it's not voting 33 times to repeal the Affordable Care Act, it's voting again and again and again for more and more drilling.

What all of this ignores is that the Obama Administration's offshore drilling plan already makes more than 75 percent of our oil and gas resources available for drilling. Two months ago, industry analysts were projecting that by the end of the year, we would have fifty percent more floating rigs operating in the Gulf than before the BP spill. Turns out they were wrong. We have roughly 50 percent more rigs operating in the Gulf today. And we have more rigs operating in the United States than the rest of the world combined.

Yet this latest Republican drilling bill that we are considering today would threaten important fisheries such as Bristol Bay off of Alaska and rush additional leasing in sensitive environments in the Arctic. It would allow drilling off the East and West Coasts by reviving long-dead lease sales proposed by the Bush Administration just 4 days before leaving office.

Next week we will consider Republican legislation on the Floor to prohibit “midnight” regulations; yet today we are marking up a Republican bill to legislatively reinstate the Bush Administration “midnight” offshore leasing plan.

When you include bills that have been reported by all Committees, all together, this Republican House has cast more than 110 votes on the Floor to benefit the oil and gas industry. Yet they have not voted once in support of clean energy like wind and solar. Because here in the Republican House of Representatives, it is “oil above all,” all of the time.