

House Votes to Lift Moratorium on Off-Shore Drilling

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Altmire Hails Historic Expansion of Domestic Oil Production

September 24, 2008

(Washington, D.C.) – U.S. Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-04) today voted to open up over 500 million acres for drilling by ending the current moratorium on oil and gas leasing of the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). This is the largest single expansion of drilling in U.S. history and would permit access to an estimated 80 billion barrels of oil and over 400 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

“Removal of the moratorium demonstrates that the voices of the American people have been heard. For months I have been calling on House leaders to allow a vote on drilling, and today we have finally responded,” said Congressman Altmire. “The people of Western Pennsylvania can now count on an unprecedented level of domestic oil production to help America reduce its dependence on foreign oil and help meet our energy needs.”

Since 1982, Congress has voted each year to renew the moratorium on oil and gas drilling off the Atlantic and Pacific shores as part of the federal budget. This is the first time in over 25 years that Congress has acted to end the moratorium. Currently, 34 million acres of the OCS are open for drilling and today’s action would permit the leasing of over 500 million additional acres. Upon enactment of the bill, the Department of Interior will be able to initiate the process for leasing areas offshore from 3 miles and beyond.

The continuing resolution (H.R. 2638) passed the House by a vote of 370 to 58 and moves to the Senate for further action. It is anticipated that the Senate will approve the bill this week and President Bush will sign it into law by the end of September.