

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 13
INTRODUCED BY D. ANKNEY

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA URGING THE PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS TO MAKE THE OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF AVAILABLE FOR ENERGY DEVELOPMENT IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE MANNER.

WHEREAS, policies of the federal government have placed much of the nation's Outer Continental Shelf off-limits to oil and natural gas production; and

WHEREAS, development of oil and natural gas resources, where allowed off our shores, has coexisted for decades with recreational and commercial activities while benefiting the entire nation; and

WHEREAS, America's increased dependence on foreign energy supplies and global competition for oil and natural gas present a threat to our national security; and

WHEREAS, the nation's energy use is growing twice as fast as energy production, and since 2000, natural gas prices have increased 140% and oil prices have increased 107%; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Energy forecasts that the annual average price for natural gas will raise 10% in 2007; and

WHEREAS, rising energy costs are taking a toll on poor families throughout the nation; and according to the National Energy Assistance Directors' Association, 32% of families had to sacrifice medical care, 24% of families failed to make their rent or mortgage payment, 20% of families were without food for at least a day, and 44% of families skipped paying or only partially paid their home energy bill in the past year; and

WHEREAS, applications for the low-income home energy assistance program in 2006 reached almost 5.8 million households, the highest level in the last 13 years, with applications up an average of 12%, while nine states reported increases of at least 25%; and

WHEREAS, the nation's farming and ranching sectors depend on a reliable and affordable supply of energy to run equipment, fertilize crops, and transport products to market; and

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, over the past 3 years, increases in the fuel prices paid index have averaged 31%, and higher energy prices mean increased costs to farmers and ranchers already facing tremendous economic challenges; and

WHEREAS, farmers' fuel, oil, and electricity expenditures have increased from \$8.6 billion to \$11.5 billion since 1999, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture; these increases led to a \$4.5 billion decline in the

nation's fertilizer industry, which uses natural gas as a raw material to produce nitrogen fertilizer; and since 2002, 36% of the nation's fertilizer industry has been shut down or mothballed; and

WHEREAS, in spite of significant progress in energy efficiency, the nation will still need 32% more energy to support economic growth by 2025; and

WHEREAS, inland states are doing more to increase domestic gas production, including in Montana's Powder River Basin; and

WHEREAS, Montana is cooperating with federal agencies in coordinating energy production on public lands that lie within state borders in an effort to better meet the energy needs of all Americans; and

WHEREAS, Montana's public lands produced more than 4.3 billion barrels of oil and more than 32.4 billion cubic feet of gas in 2006, generating more than \$54.7 million in federal oil and gas royalties; and

WHEREAS, public lands that lie off the nation's coasts also hold enormous potential for energy production, which could significantly help to meet the energy needs of all Americans; and

WHEREAS, the Outer Continental Shelf is conservatively estimated to hold more than 419 trillion cubic feet of technically recoverable natural gas and 86 billion barrels of technically recoverable oil; and

WHEREAS, as this nation faces the challenge of increasing domestic energy production, it is important to remember that public lands that lie off the nation's coasts hold enormous potential for energy production, which could significantly help to meet the energy needs of all Americans; and

WHEREAS, a portion of the royalties from offshore oil and gas production continues to fund the land and water conservation fund, having already obligated more than \$36 million in grants to the State of Montana to fund 763 grants and preserving more than 72,570 acres.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

(1) That President George W. Bush revoke administrative withdrawals on offshore energy development on the nation's Outer Continental Shelf to provide needed energy resources.

(2) That the U.S. Congress make the nation's Outer Continental Shelf available for energy development in an environmentally responsible manner.

(3) That the Secretary of State send copies of this resolution to President George W. Bush, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Congress, the Montana Congressional Delegation, and the U.S. Secretaries of the Interior and Energy.

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