



Senator Feinstein Votes Against Proceeding To Offshore Oil Drilling Bill

July 26, 2006

Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) today voted against proceeding to the offshore oil drilling bill because it does not provide additional safeguards against drilling off the California coast and, when reconciled with legislation in the House, could open up millions of acres of the outer continental shelf to drilling. Following is Senator Feinstein’s statement:

“California’s coast is one of our state’s most precious jewels. It attracts visitors from around the world and generates billions for the economy. Yet, miles of coastline could be destroyed in an instant by a catastrophic oil spill. The consequences would be incalculable.

That’s why Californians of all political stripes have come together over the past quarter century to oppose any effort to expand drilling on the outer continental shelf off California. Yet today, there is legislation moving through Congress that doesn’t provide additional protection for California as it does for Florida.

The Senate bill would open up millions of acres of the Gulf of Mexico to drilling, and it would ban drilling off the Florida panhandle until 2022 – 10 years beyond the current Presidential moratorium. However, no amendments can be made to this bill, and there is no public agreement that the House would take the Senate bill without conference.

That’s why I voted against proceeding to this bill.

I am deeply concerned that Senators cannot offer amendments giving California and other States the same protections that Florida is receiving under the bill. I have joined with Senator Boxer in supporting a measure by Senator Menendez that would have extended the drilling ban until 2022 along the East and West coasts. I had hoped that this measure could have been offered as an amendment.

Furthermore, I fear that the bill that could emerge from a House-Senate conference would do major damage to the moratoria currently in place and lead to more drilling on the outer continental shelf.

Californians have spoken loud and clear that they do not want more drilling on the outer continental shelf. Congress should be looking for ways to strengthen protections against this drilling, not looking for ways to put our seashores in jeopardy.”

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