

Calendar No. 71

106TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION**S. 330****[Report No. 106-33]**

To promote the research, identification, assessment, exploration, and development of methane hydrate resources, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 28, 1999

Mr. AKAKA (for himself, Mr. LOTT, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. CRAIG, and Mr. GRAHAM) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

MARCH 22, 1999

Reported by Mr. MURKOWSKI, without amendment

A BILL

To promote the research, identification, assessment, exploration, and development of methane hydrate 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 “Methane Hydrate Re-
5 search and Development Act of 1999”.

1 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

2 In this Act:

3 (1) CONTRACT.—The term “contract” means a
4 procurement contract within the meaning of section
5 6303 of title 31, United States Code.

6 (2) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT.—The term “co-
7 operative agreement” means a cooperative agree-
8 ment within the meaning of section 6305 of title 31,
9 United States Code.

10 (3) GRANT.—The term “grant” means a grant
11 awarded under a grant agreement, within the mean-
12 ing of section 6304 of title 31, United States Code.

13 (4) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The
14 term “institution of higher education” means an in-
15 stitution of higher education, within the meaning of
16 section 102(a)(1) of the Higher Education Act of
17 1965.

18 (5) METHANE HYDRATE.—The term “methane
19 hydrate” means a methane clathrate that—

20 (A) is in the form of a methane-water ice-
21 like crystalline material; and

22 (B) is stable and occurs naturally in deep-
23 ocean and permafrost areas.

24 (6) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
25 the Secretary of Energy.

1 (7) SECRETARY OF DEFENSE.—The term “Sec-
2 retary of Defense” means the Secretary of Defense,
3 acting through the Secretary of the Navy.

4 (8) SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.—The term
5 “Secretary of the Interior” means the Secretary of
6 the Interior, acting through the Director of the
7 United States Geological Survey.

8 (9) DIRECTOR.—The term “Director” means
9 the Director of the National Science Foundation.

10 **SEC. 3. METHANE HYDRATE RESEARCH AND DEVELOP-**
11 **MENT PROGRAM.**

12 (a) IN GENERAL.—

13 (1) COMMENCEMENT OF PROGRAM.—Not later
14 than 180 days after the date of enactment of this
15 Act, the Secretary, in consultation with the Sec-
16 retary of Defense, the Secretary of the Interior, and
17 the Director, shall commence a program of methane
18 hydrate research and development.

19 (2) DESIGNATIONS.—The Secretary, the Sec-
20 retary of Defense, the Secretary of the Interior, and
21 the Director shall designate individuals to carry out
22 this section.

23 (3) MEETINGS.—The individuals designated
24 under paragraph (2) shall meet not later than 120
25 days after the date on which all such individuals are

1 designated and not less frequently than every 120
2 days thereafter to—

3 (A) review the progress of the program
4 under paragraph (1); and

5 (B) make recommendations on future ac-
6 tivities to occur subsequent to the meeting.

7 (b) GRANTS, CONTRACTS, AND COOPERATIVE
8 AGREEMENTS.—

9 (1) ASSISTANCE AND COORDINATION.—The
10 Secretary may award grants or contracts to, or enter
11 into cooperative agreements with, institutions of
12 higher education and industrial enterprises to—

13 (A) conduct basic and applied research to
14 identify, explore, assess, and develop methane
15 hydrate as a source of energy;

16 (B) assist in developing technologies re-
17 quired for efficient and environmentally sound
18 development of methane hydrate resources;

19 (C) undertake research programs to pro-
20 vide safe means of transport and storage of
21 methane produced from methane hydrates;

22 (D) promote education and training in
23 methane hydrate resource research and re-
24 source development;

1 (E) conduct basic and applied research to
2 assess and mitigate the environmental impacts
3 of hydrate degassing (including both natural
4 degassing and degassing associated with com-
5 mercial development); and

6 (F) develop technologies to reduce the
7 risks of drilling through methane hydrates.

8 (2) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary may estab-
9 lish an advisory panel consisting of experts from in-
10 dustry, institutions of higher education, and Federal
11 agencies to—

12 (A) advise the Secretary on potential appli-
13 cations of methane hydrate; and

14 (B) assist in developing recommendations
15 and priorities for the methane hydrate research
16 and development program carried out under
17 subsection (a)(1).

18 (c) LIMITATIONS.—

19 (1) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—Not more
20 than 5 percent of the amount made available to
21 carry out this section for a fiscal year may be used
22 by the Secretary for expenses associated with the ad-
23 ministration of the program carried out under sub-
24 section (a)(1).

1 (2) CONSTRUCTION COSTS.—None of the funds
2 made available to carry out this section may be used
3 for the construction of a new building or the acqui-
4 sition, expansion, remodeling, or alteration of an exist-
5 ing building (including site grading and improve-
6 ment and architect fees).

7 (d) RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SECRETARY.—In car-
8 rying out subsection (b)(1), the Secretary shall—

9 (1) facilitate and develop partnerships among
10 government, industry, and institutions of higher edu-
11 cation to research, identify, assess, and explore
12 methane hydrate resources;

13 (2) undertake programs to develop basic infor-
14 mation necessary for promoting long-term interest in
15 methane hydrate resources as an energy source;

16 (3) ensure that the data and information devel-
17 oped through the program are accessible and widely
18 disseminated as needed and appropriate;

19 (4) promote cooperation among agencies that
20 are developing technologies that may hold promise
21 for methane hydrate resource development; and

22 (5) report annually to Congress on accomplish-
23 ments under this section.

1 **SEC. 4. AMENDMENT TO THE MINING AND MINERALS POL-**
2 **ICY ACT OF 1970.**

3 Section 201 of the Mining and Minerals Policy Act
4 of 1970 (30 U.S.C. 1901) is amended—

5 (1) by redesignating paragraphs (6) and (7) as
6 paragraphs (7) and (8), respectively;

7 (2) by inserting after paragraph (5) the fol-
8 lowing:

9 “(6) The term ‘methane hydrate’ means a
10 methane clathrate that—

11 “(A) is in the form of a methane-water ice-
12 like crystalline material; and

13 “(B) is stable and occurs naturally in
14 deep-ocean and permafrost areas.”; and

15 (3) in paragraph (7) (as redesignated by para-
16 graph (1))—

17 (A) in subparagraph (F), by striking
18 “and” at the end;

19 (B) by redesignating subparagraph (G) as
20 subparagraph (H); and

21 (C) by inserting after subparagraph (F)
22 the following:

23 “(G) methane hydrate; and”.

24 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

25 There are authorized to be appropriated such sums
26 as are necessary to carry out this Act.

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