

shouldn't be put on hold because Congress wants to please Big Oil.

Even with my amendment, H.R. 4899 still includes language that requires cases involving oil and gas to be resolved as expeditiously as possible and not more than 180 days after the claim is filed. Isn't that enough?

Mr. Chairman, my amendment would strike this poorly-drafted provision from the bill. We shouldn't let oil and gas litigation skip ahead of some of the most important national security cases, civil cases, and criminal cases of our time.

At the very least, I would urge my friend, Chairman HASTINGS, to revisit this provision to ensure that it is consistent with the intent of the overall legislation.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I obviously rise in opposition to this amendment, and let me talk about the underlying legislation.

The underlying legislation streamlines the judicial process to ensure that there are timely resolutions of lawsuits that seek to block and slow down American-made energy. That was what the whole idea was.

In fact, I referred to this in my comments on the previous amendment, where we have a lot of litigation slowing down the process, so the intent of the underlying legislation was to make sure that there was a timely response to this, so that there can be, again, some certainty in the process.

Now, what I find interesting—I think the gentleman from Florida makes some valid points as to what, perhaps, the interpretation of the underlying legislation, but I would remind the gentleman that—when this legislation was on the floor as an individual amendment—exact language was in here, the Judiciary Committee—who has jurisdiction, obviously, over this—waived their jurisdiction and felt that the language was very good.

I would certainly be willing to—if the gentleman has a way to maybe fine-tune that, I think that is something that we should look at, but—and this is the important point here, Mr. Chairman, as we debate this amendment—his approach to this is like taking a sledge hammer to a fly.

I don't think that that is the proper way to go because he strikes the whole section dealing with giving priority and trying to get certainty in the judicial process, so I rise in opposition to the gentleman.

I will say to the gentleman, as this legislation moves forward and he has some suggestions—if and when the Senate, by the way, passes legislation and we can fine-tune this—to address, I

think, some valid concerns that he has, while still making sure that energy-produced litigation is dealt with in a timely manner. I think there might be some common ground on that.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that his approach, by striking that whole section out of this legislation, is not the proper way to go.

Mr. Chairman, I urge rejection of the amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Chairman, just to respond to a couple of points, the Judiciary Committee may have waived jurisdiction. As my friend knows, there was no vote to waive jurisdiction. Had there been, I would have raised this very issue then, as a member of the Judiciary Committee.

Secondly, if the purpose of this legislation is to streamline lawsuits—and that was the whole idea behind the legislation—then having language that requires these to be heard as expeditiously as possible and not more than 180 days, that does that. That is in the bill, even after this amendment passes.

I can't believe that it was the intention of the drafters of this legislation to put these oil and gas disputes ahead of cases that involve plots to kill Americans, as is the case with the mastermind of the Benghazi attack, individuals who have important civil cases, important criminal cases.

I just can't imagine the dispute between the House GOP and the Justice Department over Fast and Furious—clearly, it wasn't the intent to say that the oil and gas companies are more important than seeing that case through.

Mr. Chairman, I hope that this amendment will pass. We don't need to fine-tune the bill. It is clear enough already. I ask my colleagues to support this.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I just want to point out, again, that the Judiciary Committee last year did waive jurisdiction on this, but I do think that the gentleman makes a valid point.

We all know that legislation is a work in progress, many times. As I acknowledge, I think the gentleman raises the point; but, again, Mr. Chairman, the reason why this amendment ought to be rejected is because it takes out the whole section, and now, you are left with a situation where there is not a certainty whatsoever in these lawsuits.

I don't think that is a proper way to go, especially with the volatility of the energy market worldwide. When we have an opportunity to use the resources we have in this country, whether you are talking about offshore or onshore, to ensure not only the safety, but to add certainty to a growing economy, we should take advantage of that.

I would urge rejection of this amendment because I think that what we put in the underlying legislation is valid for what it is attempting to do.

Mr. Chairman, I urge rejection of the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTCH).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida will be postponed.

The Acting CHAIR. The Committee will rise informally.

The Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BISHOP of Utah) assumed the chair.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with amendments in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 803. An act to reform and strengthen the workforce investment system of the Nation to put Americans back to work and make the United States more competitive in the 21st century.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Committee will resume its sitting.

LOWERING GASOLINE PRICES TO FUEL AN AMERICA THAT WORKS ACT OF 2014

The Committee resumed its sitting.

AMENDMENT NO. 7 OFFERED BY MR. BLUMENAUER

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 7 printed in House Report 113-493.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of title I (page 54, after line 24) add the following:

Subtitle E—Miscellaneous Provisions

SEC. 25001. ELIGIBILITY FOR NEW LEASES AND THE TRANSFER OF LEASES.

(a) ISSUANCE OF NEW LEASES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Beginning in fiscal year 2016, the Secretary of the Interior shall not accept bids on any new leases offered pursuant to this title (including the amendments made by this title) from a person described in paragraph (2) unless the person has renegotiated each covered lease with respect to which the person is a lessee, to modify the payment responsibilities of the person to require the payment of royalties if the price of oil and natural gas is greater than or equal to the price thresholds described in clauses (v) through (vii) of section 8(a)(3)(C) of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1337(a)(3)(C)).

(2) PERSONS DESCRIBED.—A person referred to in paragraph (1) is—