

In closing, I would like to congratulate Ms. Demby for a job well done.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S OBLIGATION TO THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

HON. CHRISTOPHER JOHN

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 17, 1999

Mr. JOHN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a bill with Mr. TAUZIN and the entire Louisiana congressional delegation that will bring closure to an issue that has lingered long enough concerning our home State of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, the State of Louisiana and the Federal Government have a long history of working together to develop our abundant natural resources in a cooperative manner that protects our unique habitat and spurs economic development. I am pleased that we have been able to rectify our differences when they occur in order to reach sensible and judicious decisions that foster goodwill and the efficient use of our resource base.

Mr. Speaker, there remains before this House an obligation on the part of the Federal Government to satisfy an authorization that was included in the Oil Pollution Act of 1990. This authorization was crafted to resolve a unique dispute between the State of Louisiana and the Federal Government over the development of the oil and gas resources on the Outer Continental Shelf. Unfortunately, this authorization has never been satisfied and my home state has lost literally millions of dollars as a result.

Today, I am joined by members from Louisiana, Texas, New York and Pennsylvania in introducing legislation directing the Minerals Management Service (MMS) to grant the State of Louisiana and its lessees a credit in the payment of Federal offshore royalties to satisfy the authorization contained within the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 for oil and gas drainage in the West Delta Field.

I will be brief with the history of this matter, but I feel compelled to clarify for all our colleagues why the language contained in OPA must be satisfied both out of concern for the treatment of the State and for the protection of our coastal environment.

In November of 1985, the State of Louisiana began to notify the MMS that a federal lessee was draining the West Delta Field at the expense of the State and its lessees. The Governor made this request based on the entire history of cooperative development agreements between the State and Federal government. The State sought to "unitize" the field by allocating the appropriate shares of the field's resources to each lessee. Unitization is standard practice in cases where multiple producers share common reservoirs. Much to the State's amazement, officials at MMS disagreed with the State and the entire Louisiana congressional delegation regarding the need and availability of relief for the State.

In order to bring some unbiased perspective to the debate, the Congress authorized an independent fact finder to review the situation and to determine if unauthorized drainage oc-

curred and to what extent, if any, loss had been identified. In 1988, the Congress, in the Interior Appropriations Act for FY89, authorized the Secretary of the Interior to appoint an independent fact-finder to determine if Louisiana had been drained of its gas and oil reserves and, if so, the market value of those confiscated reserves.

That independent fact finder reported to Congress in 1989 that drainage had indeed occurred and quantified the resulting loss. At that point, the congressional delegation sought and obtained an authorization of appropriations for compensation that matched the determination of the fact finder. It is important to note that during the 4-year period of study, the federal lessee continued to drain the sacred reservoir and actually continued to drain the field until the Federal wells ceased producing in 1998.

Why is that important to note? Because the State is seeking compensation only for the drainage that can be empirically determined by the fact finder's report for those initial 4 years. All drainage that occurred for the next decade has basically been written off by my State although they would have every right to seek their share of those revenues siphoned by the Federal Government. In short, my State is knowingly leaving money on the table in order to make a good faith effort to resolve this issue.

In addition, we believe it is important to point out that satisfying this obligation in no way opens the doors to a myriad of similar demands on the Federal budget. From early on, the uniqueness of this situation was recognized when the Department of Interior wrote to then-Senator Johnston on September 19, 1991, that "To the best of our knowledge, the West Delta dispute is the only (emphasis added) situation in which the Department did not agree to unitization, or a similar joint development agreement on the Outer Continental Shelf when requested to do so by the Governor of a coastal State." To verify that this situation is unique, the State of Louisiana thoroughly reviewed its records and has confirmed that there are no other similar cases anywhere along the OCS boundary. In fact, in that same letter the Department wrote, "The Department agrees with your understanding that Section 6004 (c) of the Oil Pollution Act does not create a precedent for the payment of any funds to any parties other than the State of Louisiana and its lessees."

As for the environmental concerns raised by the Federal government's inappropriate actions, the record is clear. In OPA 90, the Congress specifically reiterated the harmful effects of "unrestrained competitive production on hydrocarbons from a common hydrocarbon-bearing geological area underlying the Federal and State boundary." The logic behind this language is simple. Why would we encourage the construction and operation of more oil and gas wells in U.S. waters than are necessary? If a field can be produced with one well, having two only doubles that chances of an accident. The concept is common sense and has been at the root of all Federal and State policies for decades. I see no reason to abandon that intelligent precedent now.

Mr. Speaker, after years of waiting, my State is interested in putting this issue behind

us and moving on. What makes that statement so intriguing is that is the exact line the MMS stated in a letter to the dean of the Louisiana delegation over 9 years ago when they too wrote, "We are also very interested in putting this matter behind us."

Our legislation is simple. It will allow the State and its lessees to recover a portion of what was lost by the unauthorized development of the West Delta Field and will do so in the most benign of methods. The State and its lessees have proposed an alternative method for providing compensation by foregoing payment of federal royalties due by the lessee on other federal leases and distributing those withholdings to the State and lessee until the federal obligation is satisfied. Upon restitution, the lessee will resume their payments to the Federal Government. By withholding royalty payments and sharing those revenues proportionately between the State and its lessees we expect the Federal obligation will be satisfied within 2 to 3 years.

After more than a decade, it is time for the federal government to settle this outstanding obligation and, at the same time, protect the rights of my home State. In addition, we must reaffirm that this Congress does not support policies that may well create precedents that would needlessly and recklessly endanger our coastal environments.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JAMES H. MALONEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 17, 1999

Mr. MALONEY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was unavoidably detained during rollcall vote No. 588.

Had I been present I would have voted yea on rollcall No. 588.

CELEBRATING THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF MRS. AGNES VENETTA STANDBRIDGE

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 17, 1999

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of Mrs. Agnes Venetta Standbridge, who will celebrate her 100th birthday on December 20, 1999.

As a young adult, Mrs. Standbridge observed first hand the effects that both World War I and World War II had on family and friends. She saw the world turned upside down as many of her friends, neighbors and family went off to the trenches in Europe and never returned or returned scarred by injury and the nightmares of battle. During World War II, Mrs. Standbridge was a young mother raising her four children in Lemington Spa near Coventry, England. There, she and her husband, Albert Standbridge did their best to protect their children from the sights and sounds of German aircraft bombing factories in the area. During these tumultuous times

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she developed a quiet courage and inner strength. By the early 1950's she would need that bravery to confront the passing of her beloved husband at a young age. She never remarried and his memory remains with her today.

Mrs. Standbridge began another memorable chapter in her life when she moved to Northern California and ultimately settled in Mountain View where she has lived for 38 years. Living in beautiful Silicon Valley, Mrs. Standbridge witnessed the world change again—in a far more positive way. The technological revolution that has occurred over the last few decades has made her world and ours, a more prosperous place than ever before.

The events of the 20th Century have had a great impact on Mrs. Standbridge's life and she has been shaped by the relationships of those who hold her dear. Family and friendship flow through her life and have enriched her century of living. She is a great example of resilience and courage. I'm proud to represent Mrs. Standbridge and ask my colleagues to join me in wishing this extraordinary woman a very blessed and a very happy 100th birthday.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

TRIBUTE TO PETER McCUEN

HON. DOUG OSE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 17, 1999

Mr. OSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a humble heart to pay tribute to a distinguished leader, a personal friend, and a true pioneer for the city of Sacramento, Mr. Peter McCuen. The city lost one of its great giants on Monday, when Peter succumbed to his third battle with cancer.

More than any other person in the last 20 years, Peter McCuen transformed the landscape of Sacramento and many of those who live in it. We can see the visual legacy he left when we drive through the Highway 50 corridor. The region's most graceful skyscraper and its most visible ziggurat building remind us how integral he was in bringing prosperity to the city.

Peter came to Sacramento in 1980 after having successful careers as a professor at Stanford University and a hi-tech entrepreneur in Silicon Valley. He had planned on retiring in the city. But immediately after he arrived, he saw the many opportunities Sacramento had to offer. He was involved in over 100 development projects, including the Library Plaza, the U.S. Bank Plaza, the Teale Data Building, and

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the redevelopment of Mather Air Field. He also played a vital role in brining major corporations like Intel and Sprint to this region, which created thousands of jobs for the people of Sacramento. His impact on the economic development of the Sacramento area is unparalleled.

But for many of us, it is not just the suburban business parks he built or the highrises he helped engineer that touched our lives. It is Peter's unreserved generosity, canny vision, boundless energy and incomparable intellect that make him a truly unique human being.

Peter's philanthropic efforts benefited a long list of causes and groups in the city. His renowned love of arts, education and civic organizations earned him the Regional Pride Excellence Award in 1991. He served on the advisory boards of the Cancer Center at UC Davis Medical Center and both the engineering school and the graduate school of management at UCD. He also served on the advisory board to the president of the Cal State University, Sacramento and the State's Clean Air Partnership.

Peter had a bright vision for our city, and he tried everything in his power to fulfill that vision. Sacramento is a better place because of Peter McCuen. My heart goes out to his wife Susan, his two children, Pamela and Patrick, and the entire McCuen family. Sacramento will miss one of its true leaders.