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 is so important to our home state 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 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