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## **NEW JERSEY CONGRESSMEN JOIN TOGETHER IN BI-PARTISAN SUPPORT OF OCEAN PROTECTION!**

*Ocean defenders say “NO” to offshore drilling in the Atlantic Ocean*

**Sandy Hook**---This afternoon, the Congressional delegation of New Jersey voted nearly unanimously in bi-partisan support for the ocean and against Big Oil’s attack on the Atlantic. However, despite New Jersey’s strong opposition, the bill, which mandates that at least one-half of the Atlantic Ocean be opened for drilling, and reckless exploration, passed by a margin of 243 – 179.

New Jersey Republicans LoBiondo (R-2nd), Runyan (R-3rd), Smith (R-4th), Lance (R-7th), and Frelinghuysen (R-11th) joined with New Jersey Democrats in voting against this bill that could bring seismic surveys and exploratory wells to New Jersey’s waters and the greater Mid-Atlantic Ocean as soon as 2012.

“Today, the New Jersey delegation remembered their sandy-roots and the importance of coastal tourism, and fishing, to their constituents,” said Cindy Zipf, Executive Director of Clean Ocean Action. “They know the importance of clean beaches and water, and they stood up to Big Oil and the ‘Drill Baby Drill’ propaganda. We are very proud of our delegation for today’s leadership.”

Over the past week, Congress moved a trilogy of bills, all which passed the House of Representatives:

- H.R. 1229: “Putting the Gulf Back to Work Act,” (a.k.a. “No Legal Review or Oversight of Big Oil Act”) a bill that imposes rushed, arbitrary permitting deadlines and would prevent application of key public-interest and environmental laws by putting up roadblocks to judicial and administrative review of drilling decisions.
- H.R. 1230: “Restarting American Offshore Leasing Now Act,” (a.k.a. “Mandate Drilling Off Virginia’s Coast, Immediately, No Matter What Act”) a bill that specifically targets several areas, including “Sale 220” (an area within 75 miles of the New Jersey Shore), for immediate drilling approval, with no new environmental review or public input.
- H.R. 1231: “Reversing President Obama’s Offshore Moratorium Act,” (a.k.a. “Lease At Least Half Of The Atlantic Ocean Now Act”) a bill that mandates that all oceans, from the Pacific to the Atlantic and Arctic be opened to drilling, and that at least half of those ocean areas be leased immediately if certain conditions are met – conditions that ARE met here in the Atlantic Ocean.

“New Jersey Congressmen from both sides of the aisle, along with U.S. Senators Lautenberg and Menendez, and Governor Chris Christie, are united in representing the interests of their coastal constituents, the coastal economy, and the marine ecosystem,” said Sean Dixon, Coastal Policy Attorney for Clean Ocean Action. “We are only discouraged that despite New Jersey’s near-unanimous show of bi-partisanship, these bills were passed. We hope that the Senate will reject these bills and work toward a clean energy future,” concluded Dixon.

“We salute our Republican and Democrat Representatives who crossed the aisle and came together to vote for their constituents and the ocean. While too many in Washington are stuck in the gridlock of partisanship, New Jersey is a beacon for bi-partisan support for doing what is right,” concluded Zipf.

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