

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1794

To prohibit drilling in the Arctic Ocean.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 16, 2015

Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. SANDERS, and Mr. FRANKEN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

A BILL

To prohibit drilling in the Arctic Ocean.

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 “Stop Arctic Ocean
5 Drilling Act of 2015”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS; STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that, as of the date
8 of enactment of this Act—

9 (1) global climate change is occurring due
10 largely to anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse
11 gases and will continue to pose ongoing risks and

1 challenges to the people and the Government of the
2 United States;

3 (2) the evidence of impacts and dangers of cli-
4 mate change are supported by numerous reports and
5 panels, such as the 2014 National Climate Assess-
6 ment, the United States Global Change Research
7 Program, and the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review
8 of the Department of Defense;

9 (3) the average temperature in the United
10 States during the past decade was 0.8 degree Cel-
11 sius (1.5 degrees Fahrenheit) warmer than the
12 1901–1960 average, and the last decade was the
13 warmest on record both in the United States and
14 globally;

15 (4) a global temperature increase of 2 degrees
16 Celsius will lead to increased droughts, rising seas,
17 mass extinctions, heat waves, desertification,
18 wildfires, and acidifying oceans;

19 (5) delaying action on climate change will result
20 in severe economic losses, and global mitigation costs
21 increase by approximately 40 percent for each dec-
22 ade of delay;

23 (6) at least 80 percent of the carbon from
24 known fossil fuel reserves must not be released to
25 the atmosphere to have an 80-percent chance of

1 avoiding the worst effects of climate change stem-
2 ming from a 2-degree-Celsius change in global tem-
3 perature;

4 (7) developing oil and gas reserves in the Arctic
5 Ocean is incompatible with staying within that glob-
6 al carbon budget and avoiding the worst effects of
7 climate change; and

8 (8) the Arctic Ocean is home to invaluable and
9 fragile ecosystems, which are critical to fisheries, mi-
10 gratory birds, indigenous populations, and subsist-
11 ence hunters.

12 (b) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It is the policy of the
13 United States that the Arctic Ocean should be managed
14 for the best interests of the people of the United States,
15 including by keeping fossil fuels in the ground to avoid
16 the dangerous impacts of climate change.

17 **SEC. 3. PROHIBITION OF OIL AND GAS LEASING IN ARCTIC**
18 **OCEAN AREAS OF THE OUTER CONTINENTAL**
19 **SHELF.**

20 Section 8 of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act
21 (43 U.S.C. 1337) is amended by adding at the end the
22 following:

23 “(q) PROHIBITION OF OIL AND GAS LEASING IN
24 ARCTIC PLANNING AREA OF THE OUTER CONTINENTAL
25 SHELF.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act

1 or any other law, the Secretary of the Interior shall not
2 issue or renew a lease or any other authorization for the
3 exploration, development, or production of oil, natural gas,
4 or any other mineral in the Arctic Ocean, including the
5 Beaufort Sea and Chukchi Sea Planning Areas.”.

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