

The CLEAR Act

Written by Mike Honda

In the wake of the Gulf of Mexico's BP oil spill disaster, I and my colleagues in the House acted to protect America's families and businesses, rebuild the Gulf Coast, hold BP and oil companies accountable, and work to ensure that a spill of this kind never happens again. On July 30th, the House passed [the CLEAR Act \(H.R. 3534\)](#) by a [vote of 209-193](#). Not only is this good for our families, our environment, and the health of our natural resources, it will reduce our deficit—saving taxpayers more than \$5 billion in the next five years (

[CBO](#)

), and up to \$50 billion over the next 25 years (

[GAO](#)

).

Here are some of the reasons I voted to pass this important legislation.

- **New Oil Drilling Safety Standards:** Requires all vessels and rigs off U.S. coasts, even foreign owned ones, to fully adhere to new U.S. safety standards and subject to stiffer penalties for safety violations.

- **Eliminating Outdated Liability Limits:** The bill removes the current \$75 million cap on economic damages and ensures that the responsible parties will cover 100 percent of the oil pollution cleanup costs and damages caused by spills they create.

- **Reforming Federal Oversight of Oil Drilling:** Abolishes the scandal-ridden Minerals Management Service (MMS) and divides oversight into three separate entities to eliminate conflicts-of-interest: one to manage leasing & permitting; another to do the policing of health, safety, and environmental regulations; and a third to collect the American people's energy revenues.

- **Strengthening Oil Spill Commission:** Gives teeth to the [President's Commission on the Deepwater Horizon](#) oil spill by giving the Commission subpoena power so they can get the answers they need to understand what actually happened, and report to Congress on recommendations to [ensure effective oversight](#), inspection, monitoring, and response capabilities.

- **Restoring the Gulf & Coastal Communities:** Establishes a [Gulf of Mexico Restoration Program](#) to coordinate the efforts to return the Gulf to health following the oil rig explosion. It also works to ensure that

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fees from offshore drilling go toward protecting and improving our oceans.

- **Royalty Reform for Drilling on Public Lands:** Closes royalty loopholes that allow oil companies to drill for free on public lands during times of high oil prices due to a flawed Republican energy bill in 1995. Taxpayers for Common Sense urged Congress to pass the CLEAR Act and stop the \$50 billion giveaway to the oil and gas industry.

- **Land and Water Conservation Fund:** Ensures that money obtained from the sale of the public's resources be used to protect and conserve our natural, historical, and recreational resources by providing mandatory full funding for the

[Land and Water Conservation Fund \(LWCF\)](#)

and the

[Historic Preservation Fund \(HPF\)](#)

. This is about a commitment to offset some of the destructive effects of oil and gas production by preserving places with high quality recreation opportunities and vital wildlife habitat.

[Learn more from the Natural Resources Committee»](#)

[Clear facts about the CLEAR Act»](#)