

Washington -

Congressman Lee Terry last night voted in favor of H.R. 2021, the Jobs and Energy Permitting Act of 2011, which passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 253 to 166. The legislation, cosponsored by Terry, will streamline and accelerate the permitting process for oil exploration opportunities off the coast of Alaska by imposing a six-month timeframe for the evaluation of a permit application, rather than allowing red tape to endlessly postpone energy exploration and production in this region. During the debate, Terry spoke on the House floor in support of the bill.

It is estimated that the Alaskan Outer Continental Shelf contains nearly 28 billion barrels of oil and 122 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. Development of this region could produce nearly 1 million barrels of oil each day while creating a projected 54,000 American jobs. Utilizing these resources would greatly reduce the United States' reliance on foreign oil while bringing our country much-needed jobs.

“The Federal government’s inability to issue viable permits to drill offshore Alaska has long kept resources and domestic jobs from the American people. Though the EPA has testified before Energy and Commerce that there is no human health risk, Alaskans and Americans are still waiting for new energy resources, six years and counting.

“While the EPA’s regional office has granted air permits to allow deep sea drilling, the process has been repeatedly stalled when the Administrator’s Environmental Appeals Board rejects the permit already granted, and the process repeats itself over and over, with no end in sight. Meanwhile, Americans are out of work and anxiously await new jobs. This bill will require the EPA to take final action – grant or deny a permit – within six months of receiving an application. It is a step in the right direction,” Terry said.