

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 991

To prohibit drilling in the Arctic Ocean.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 1, 2017

Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. PETERS, and Ms. HARRIS) 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 2017”.

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

1 gases and will continue to pose ongoing risks and
2 challenges to the people and the Government of the
3 United States;

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

10 (3) from 1880 through 2015, global tempera-
11 tures have increased by approximately 1.06 degrees
12 Celsius;

13 (4) a global temperature increase of 2 degrees
14 Celsius will lead to increased droughts, rising seas,
15 mass extinctions, heat waves, desertification, wild-
16 fires, and acidifying oceans;

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

21 (6) at least 80 percent of the carbon from
22 known fossil fuel reserves must not be released to
23 the atmosphere to have an 80-percent chance of
24 avoiding the worst effects of climate change stem-

1 ming from a 2-degree-Celsius change in global tem-
2 perature;

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

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

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

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

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

22 “(q) PROHIBITION OF OIL AND GAS LEASING IN
23 ARCTIC PLANNING AREA OF THE OUTER CONTINENTAL
24 SHELF.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act
25 or any other law, the Secretary of the Interior shall not

1 issue or renew a lease or any other authorization for the
2 exploration, development, or production of oil, natural gas,
3 or any other mineral in the Arctic Ocean, including the
4 Beaufort Sea and Chukchi Sea Planning Areas.”.

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