

Amendment prevents companies that partner with Iran or Syria from profiting from U.S. oil leases

WASHINGTON – Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter (NY-28) today continued her fight to support one of our nation's closest allies – Israel -- and the people of Syria in the face of threats from the oppressive Iranian Regime and the Assad Regime of Syria. Slaughter offered an amendment that prohibits issuing drilling leases to companies that violate current international sanctions imposed against the Iranian and Syrian regimes.

"My amendment simply states that no company that violates the Iran Sanctions Act, or the Syrian Accountability Act will be allowed to profit from the oil leases in today's bill," said Slaughter. "The amendment will help to ensure that no company that helps to prop up these oppressive and destabilizing regimes can benefit from this legislation. My amendment will help to isolate Iran, promote stability in the Middle East and protect Israel."

Currently, the United States Government has imposed sanctions on 13 companies because of business dealings with Iran. In addition, the threat of sanctions is hanging over other companies that continue to do business there. In total, more than 16 oil companies remain "active" in Iran. These companies are defying the international community and helping to empower an Iranian regime that exports terrorism around the world, continues to seek nuclear weapons capability, and threatens the security of the entire Middle East, especially our ally and friend, Israel.

The amendment also targets the Assad Regime of Syria, which has threatened the stability of the Middle East region and has been responsible for the murder of thousands of innocent Syrians. Most recently, Syria has issued veiled threats regarding the use of chemical and biological weapons. Existing sanctions are already helping to increase the pressure on the Assad regime. Thanks to these sanctions, Syrian oil production dropped by 60,000 barrels per day in 2011, and they continue to be punished economically as companies have cut ties with the government of Syria. Yet despite this pressure, the Assad regime continues to assault innocent civilians.

Slaughter's amendment is being offered to H.R. 6082 – House Republicans' latest proposal to open up vast new parcels of public land to oil and gas drilling without proper environmental review. Their legislation would jeopardize huge portions of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, as

well as Alaska's Bristol Bay, by minimizing environmental review requirements, a virtual giveaway to Big Oil interests.

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The text of Slaughter speech as prepared for delivery can be found below.

Motion to Recommit- Iran and Syrian Sanctions

Rep. Louise M. Slaughter

July 25, 2012

M./ Speaker,

I rise to introduce a final amendment to today's bill.

The amendment is simple in its wording, but powerful in its purpose. My amendment simply states that no company that violates the Iran Sanctions Act, or the Syrian Accountability Act, will be allowed to profit from the oil leases in today's bill.

The amendment will help to ensure that no company that helps to prop up these oppressive and destabilizing regimes can benefit from today's legislation.

Currently, the United States Government is imposing sanctions on 13 companies who maintain substantial business dealings with Iran. In addition, the threat of sanctions is hanging over other

companies that continue to do business there.

In total, more than 16 oil companies remain "active" in Iran.

These companies are defying the international community and helping to empower an Iranian regime that exports terrorism around the world, continues to seek nuclear weapons capability, and threatens the security of the entire Middle East- especially our ally and friend, Israel.

With the threat from Iran continuing to grow, it is vital that Congress respond with prudent and effective action. My amendment will help to isolate Iran, promote stability in the Middle East and protect Israel.

With regard to Syria, existing sanctions are already helping to increase the pressure on the murderous regime of President Assad. Thanks to sanctions, Syrian oil production dropped by 60,000 barrels per day in 2011, as companies cut ties with the government and exited the country.

Despite this pressure, more action is needed. My amendment will be a responsible next step to ensure that nothing in this bill will empower President Assad's continued war against the Syrian people.

M./ Speaker, for the last two years, the Majority has put the needs of special interests such as Big Oil ahead of the needs of our country, our people and our allies. Over the last two years, the Majority has voted more than 110 times to benefit Big Oil, and today – instead of passing a bill to create jobs -- the Majority proposes yet another bill to serve Big Oil interests.

If the Majority is going to move forward with such a giveaway, it is vital that they ensure that no profit derived from today's legislation goes to prop up nations who would harm our national security interests, or those of our ally Israel.

It is up to this Congress – will we sacrifice the interests of Israel and the Syrian people by passing legislation that could benefit two of the most oppressive and destabilizing regimes in the world? Or will we stand with our friend and ally Israel, and protect the people of Syria?

With both the Iranian and Syrian regimes threatening our allies and thousands of innocent people in the Middle East, I believe it is high time the United States Congress moves to further protect Israel and the people of Syria. Again, if my amendment is adopted, the House will proceed to final passage of the bill. I urge all of my colleagues to support my amendment today, and put our national interests before the wishes of Big Oil.

I YIELD back the balance of my time.