

(Washington, D.C.) – Yesterday and today, U.S. Rep. Rush Holt (NJ-12) continued to lead efforts to block legislation that, if enacted, would endanger New Jersey's beaches by accelerating offshore drilling without updating safety and environmental reviews.

As the House considered the so-called "Congressional Replacement of Offshore Drilling Plan", HR 6082, Holt offered amendments to prevent drilling off the coast of New Jersey, to ensure adequate environmental review of proposed drilling, and to end royalty free drilling the Gulf of Mexico. This was the 11th drilling bill to be brought to the House floor in the last 18 months to benefit Big Oil at the expense of worker safety, public health, and environmental degradation.

"The Big Five oil companies made a record profit of \$137 billion in 2011. In the first quarter of this year they continued to capitalize on the pain Americans are feeling at the pump, raking in \$368 million in profits per day," said Rep. Holt. "An oil spill off of the U.S. East Coast would endanger over 200,000 jobs and \$12 billion associated with New Jersey's fishing and tourism industries – and that is not even counting the indirect effects as this money flows through our local economies."

Joining with Rep. Frank Pallone (NJ-7), Rep. Holt offered an amendment to prevent any drilling of the coast of New Jersey or any other Mid Atlantic state. However, the Republican Majority blocked the Pallone-Holt amendment from even being considered on the House floor.

Rep. Holt also offered two amendments on the floor of House.

His first amendment would strike language from the bill that would allow a single environmental impact analysis to suffice for leasing areas in the diverse environments encountered off the coast of New Jersey, in the Pacific Ocean and off the coast of Alaska. Under current law, a unique environmental impact review is required for each new area proposed for drilling.

Rep. Holt's second amendment would end royalty-free drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. Currently more than 25 percent of all oil produced offshore on federal lands—oil that belongs to the American people—is produced royalty free.

The amendments were defeated on largely party line votes of 163 to 253 and 177 to 247 respectively.

Rep. Holt is also the lead sponsor of the Big Oil Bailout Prevention Act, H. R.492, which would make oil companies legally liable for the economic damages caused by oil spills, such as the one in the Gulf Coast.