

For Immediate Release:

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**Proposed Kerry, Lieberman Bill Charts Wrong Course on Climate,
Energy and Oceans**

Washington, D.C., May 12 – While we commend the efforts of Senators Kerry and Lieberman to address the very pressing issue of climate change, Oceana is shocked by the direction taken in the current legislation. As the Deepwater Drilling Disaster continues to unfold in the Gulf of Mexico, we see no justification for providing incentives for offshore drilling, as the “American Power Act” does in its revenue sharing provisions. By incentivizing offshore oil production, this bill would bribe states to gamble their coastal economies in exchange for a cut of the short-lived revenues that would otherwise benefit all Americans.

The Deepwater Drilling Disaster will be the largest environmental disaster in our nation’s history, if it is not already. Yet this bill promotes additional, unnecessary and dangerous offshore drilling. Promoting expanded offshore drilling in a bill designed to reduce carbon dioxide emissions made no sense before the disaster and makes even less sense now.

Expanding offshore drilling is a fool’s bargain. Americans take all of the risks and garner none of the benefits of offshore drilling. There is not enough oil off our shores to make America energy independent or reduce our gas prices. But new offshore drilling will continue to risk irreparable damage to valuable coastal ecosystems and economies. It will also worsen climate change. Alternatives like offshore wind power create three times more jobs, reduce carbon dioxide emissions and climate impacts, like ocean acidification. Offshore wind, done right, could make a major contribution to meeting our energy needs.

New proposals, such as allowing states to pass legislation to oppose drilling within 75 miles of their shores or allowing an impacted state veto should not lure Congress into approving expanded offshore drilling, especially in the wake of the Deepwater Drilling Disaster. The proposed revenue sharing

would take resources from the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) – which is owned by all Americans and is not part of any state – and give it away, bribing states to make their coastlines vulnerable to well-documented risks associated with offshore oil drilling. In the end, the American Power Act leaves states at the mercy of oil industry lobbyists, if they wish to protect their coastlines. The so-called impacted state veto raises more questions than it answers.

The Deepwater Drilling Disaster added insult to injury for our oceans. Climate change, driven by our fossil fuel addiction, is already taking a tremendous toll on our oceans and marine life. The oceans absorb about a third of the carbon dioxide we release, providing a useful service. But doing so makes them more acidic, which is likely to cause an eventual collapse of ocean ecosystems and fisheries. Scientists predict that ocean acidification will cause a mass extinction of coral reefs by the middle to the end of this century. Acidification is already beginning to harm marine life that depend on calcium carbonate to build their shells and skeletons. Calcium carbonate becomes less available when ocean waters become more acidic.

Meaningful climate change solutions demand that the U.S. focus its resources on expanding clean energy, such as offshore wind and other renewable energy sources. These low-carbon sources will also create jobs, lower energy costs and minimize environmental risks. Instead, the Kerry Lieberman bill extends the nation's reliance on oil and other polluting fossil fuels of the past.

To date, using conservative estimates, more than 5 million gallons of oil have gushed into the Gulf of Mexico. This has happened in spite of redundant safety systems, all of which have failed.

Oceana is dismayed that the offshore drilling provisions of this legislation will hinder climate solutions rather than strengthen them. Expanded drilling makes slowing climate change harder; expanding renewables, such as offshore wind, would make it easier. We need to reject the failed policies of the past and reduce carbon dioxide emissions to reap the economic and environmental benefits of a clean energy future for our children and grandchildren.

Oceana is left with no choice but to oppose this bill in its current form and any other climate legislation that extends our unsustainable dependence on fossil fuels into the foreseeable future, rather than moving us into the clean energy future we all deserve.

Oceana's team of marine scientists, economists, lawyers and advocates win specific and concrete policy changes to reduce pollution and prevent the irreversible collapse of fish populations, marine mammals and other sea life.

Global in scope and dedicated to conservation, Oceana has campaigners based in North America, Europe, South and Central America. For more information, please visit <http://na.Oceana.org>.