

I voted Yes on H.R. 3408, Protecting Investment in Oil Shale the Next Generation of Environmental, Energy, and Resource Security (PIONEERS) Act.

The PIONEERS Act is a bill that would increase safe exploration and production of American energy resources by removing certain government barriers. Revenues derived from this increased energy production would be used to fund a major highway, bridge, and infrastructure bill that I helped author – the American Energy and Infrastructure Act. It is tremendously important that we fund investment in our Upstate roads and bridges. The PIONEERS Act helps get that done, and could create over one million new energy jobs in our nation on its own.

Specifically, this bill requires the Administration to move forward with new offshore energy production in areas containing the most oil and natural gas resources. It provides fair and equitable revenue sharing of offshore energy revenues for coastal states. The bill directs the Secretary of the Interior to issue additional research and development, as well as commercial, leases for oil shale on lands in Wyoming, Utah and Colorado. Nothing in the bill would allow for any new drilling or exploration in New York, or anywhere else in the Northeast.

Finally, the bill directs the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to issue a permit for the Keystone XL pipeline project within 30 days. If the Commission does not act within 30 days, then the pipeline permit would be granted automatically. The Keystone project will help strengthen our energy relationship with Canada, a solid ally and friend, and create construction and energy jobs in the process.

Because we always need to make sure that we are developing energy safely, I voted in favor of an amendment offered by Rep. Hanabusa (D-Hawaii) that would require that offshore oil and gas lease applications contain specific safety requirements.

As a businessman, I'm accustomed to making plans and sticking to them. It's shocking that the United States doesn't have a national energy plan. Prices are rising at the pump, and fuel is getting more expensive for our Upstate farms, homes and businesses. The PIONEERS Act is a step in the right direction toward a coherent energy policy that encourages us to produce our own energy, not rely on unstable foreign nations for our needs. The fact that the revenue from this bill is directed toward investing in our American infrastructure makes it even more worthy of support.

The bill was approved by a vote of 237 – 187.