

Report Gives 112th Congress Failing Grade for Environmental Protection

Congressman Henry Waxman, who represents Congressional District 30 and is the ranking member of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, was in Malibu on Aug. 9 to present a report on what he described as "the most anti-environment and coastal House of Representatives in the history of Congress."

According to Waxman, the House of Representatives in the 112th Congress has become the most anti-environment House in the history of the United States. "Since January 2011, the House has voted 297 times to undermine basic environmental protections that have existed for decades and

allow more pollution into the nation's air, land, and water," Waxman said at a press conference at Pepperdine University.

"This is a dismal record and it's also a highly partisan one," Waxman said.

"During my career I've worked with Republicans and Democrats from all parts of the country to find solutions to public health and environmental issues like acid rain, stratospheric ozone protection, and urban smog," Waxman said.

"When we passed the Clean Air Act amendments in 1990, some of my closest allies were Republicans. The fundamental problem that we are seeing now is that the bipartisanship has

broken down and the environment has become a political punching bag.

"I don't believe that there is broad public support for throwing out the safeguards and standards of protection for our coast and I hope that with the release of today's report the public will better understand what is happening in Washington, and my colleagues can explain what these policies would mean for Southern California," Waxman said.

According to the report, the federal laws protecting coastal areas are a major part of the anti-environmental trend. Of the 297 anti-environment votes, 117—almost 40 percent—were

(Continued on page 15)

Ryan Embree

Waxman

(Continued from page 5)

for policies that would undermine protection of America's coastal areas, including the coast of California.

"Protecting our coastal areas should be a national priority," Waxman said. "Yet the House Republican assault on coastal water, marine life, and the environment has been relentless. Coastal protections were established because the American people want clean beaches, clean water, and development that protect our seashores. Twelve million jobs in California depend on our coast. Congress should be strengthening coastal protections, not turning the clock back."

The report finds: "the House has voted repeatedly

to force new oil and gas drilling along the California coast - as well as in other coastal areas where drilling is not now currently permitted; the House has voted 26 times to allow offshore drilling operations to meet weaker environmental and safety standards, including votes to limit environmental review of new offshore drilling projects; to block minimum standards for blowout preventers and oil spill response; and to weaken Clean Air Act protections for offshore drilling activities.

The report also states that "the House has voted 24 times to block action to address climate change - even though climate change

(Continued on page 17)

Report Says 112th Congress Fails Environment

(Continued from page 15) could spell disaster for our coasts through significant sea level rise and ocean acidification; the House voted 20 times to undermine Clean Water Act pro-

grams and protections for coastal areas and nearby waterways; and that the House has voted 16 times to weaken protections for fish and marine species, including votes to remove protec-

tions for salmon, sea turtles, sea otters, sea lions, and other species.

The report breaks down the 297 votes into the following categories: 133 votes targeted at the Environmental Protection Agency; 128 votes to block actions that prevent pollution; 51 votes targeted at the Department of Energy; 52 votes to de-fund or repeal clean energy initiatives; 47 votes to promote offshore, drilling; 87 votes to dismantle the Clean Air Act; 77 votes targeted at the Department of the Interior; 62 votes to undermine protections for public lands and wilderness; 47 votes to block actions that address climate change; and 35 votes to dismantle the Clean Water Act.

"The House has voted repeatedly to cut funding for coastal protection. It voted to cut funding for the National Ocean Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service, as well as to block implementation of the National Ocean Policy, which President Obama established to improve the country's stewardship of the oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes," Waxman said.

"People don't want our coast harmed, but I think we need to recognize that there are powerful economic interests that stand to benefit," Waxman concluded.

The full report is available online at <http://democrats.energycommerce.house.gov>

BY SUZANNE GULDIMANN



WARNING—Congressman Henry Waxman, flanked by Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission representative Scott Valor and Surfrider Foundation Policy Manager Stephanie Sekich delivers a report on Washington's growing anti-environmental trend.

MSN/Suzanne Guldemann