

Public Law 96-514

[Public Law 96-514; 42 U.S.C. 6508]

[As Amended Through P.L. 108-447, Enacted Dec. 8, 2004]

AN ACT Making appropriations for the Department of the Interior and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1981, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the following sums are appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for the Department of the Interior and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1981, and for other purposes, namely:

TITLE I—DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

LAND AND WATER RESOURCES

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ENERGY AND MINERALS

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

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EXPLORATION OF NATIONAL PETROLEUM RESERVE IN ALASKA

For necessary expenses of carrying out the provisions of section 104 of Public Law 94-258, and for conducting hereafter and with funds appropriated by this Act and by subsequent appropriation Acts, notwithstanding any other provision of law and pursuant to such rules and regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, an expeditious program of competitive leasing of oil and gas in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska, \$107,001,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That (1) activities undertaken pursuant to this Act shall include or provide for such conditions, restrictions, and prohibitions as the Secretary deems necessary or appropriate to mitigate reasonably foreseeable and significantly adverse effects on the surface resources of the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (the Reserve); (2) the provisions of section 202 and section 603 of the Federal Lands Policy and Management Act of 1976 (90 Stat. 2743) shall not be applicable to the Reserve; (3) the first lease sale shall be conducted within twenty months of the date of enactment of this Act: *Provided*, That the first lease sale shall be conducted only after publication of a final environmental impact statement if such is deemed necessary under the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332); (4) the withdrawals established by section 102 of Public Law 94-258 are

rescinded for the purposes of the oil and gas leasing program authorized herein; (5) bidding systems used in lease sales shall be based on bidding systems included in section 205(a)(1)(A) through (H) of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act Amendments of 1978 (92 Stat. 629); (6) lease tracts may encompass identified geological structures; (7) the size of lease tracts may be up to sixty thousand acres, as determined by the Secretary; (8) each lease shall be issued for an initial period of ten years, and shall be extended for so long thereafter as oil or gas is produced from the lease in paying quantities, or as drilling or reworking operations, as approved by the Secretary, are conducted thereon; (9) for purposes of conservation of the natural resources of any oil or gas pool, field, or like area, or any part thereof, lessees thereof and their representatives are authorized to unite with each other, or jointly or separately with others, in collectively adopting and operating under a unit agreement for such pool, field, or like area, or any part thereof (whether or not any other part of said oil or gas pool, field, or like area is already subject to any cooperative or unit plan of development or operation), whenever determined by the Secretary to be necessary or advisable in the public interest. Drilling, production, and well reworking operations performed in accordance with a unit agreement shall be deemed to be performed for the benefit of all leases that are subject in whole or in part to such unit agreement. When separate tracts cannot be independently developed and operated in conformity with an established well spacing or development program, any lease, or a portion thereof, may be pooled with other lands, whether or not owned by the United States, under a communitization or drilling agreement providing for an apportionment of production or royalties among the separate tracts of land comprising the drilling or spacing unit when determined by the Secretary of the Interior to be in the public interest, and operations or production pursuant to such an agreement shall be deemed to be operations or production as to each such lease committed thereto; (10) to encourage the greatest ultimate recovery of oil or gas or in the interest of conservation the Secretary is authorized to waive, suspend, or reduce the rental, or minimum royalty, or reduce the royalty on an entire leasehold, including on any lease operated pursuant to a unit agreement, whenever in his judgment the leases cannot be successfully operated under the terms provided therein. The Secretary is authorized to direct or assent to the suspension of operations and production on any lease or unit. In the event the Secretary, in the interest of conservation, shall direct or assent to the suspension of operations and production on any lease or unit, any payment of acreage rental or minimum royalty prescribed by such lease or unit likewise shall be suspended during the period of suspension of operations and production, and the term of such lease shall be extended by adding any such suspension period thereto; and (11) all receipts from sales, rentals, bonuses, and royalties on leases issued pursuant to this section shall be paid into the Treasury of the United States: *Provided*, That 50 percent thereof shall be paid by the Secretary of the Treasury semiannually, as soon thereafter as practicable after March 30 and September 30 each year, to the State of Alaska for: (A) planning; (B) construction, maintenance, and operation of essential public facilities; and (C)

other necessary provisions of public service; *Provided further*, That in the allocation of such funds, the State shall give priority to use by subdivisions of the State most directly or severely impacted by development of oil and gas leased under this Act.

Any agency of the United States and any person authorized by the Secretary may conduct geological and geophysical explorations in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska which do not interfere with operations under any contract maintained or granted previously. Any information acquired in such explorations shall be subject to the conditions of 43 U.S.C. 1352(a)(1)(A).

Any action seeking judicial review of the adequacy of any program or site-specific environmental impact statement under section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332) concerning oil and gas leasing in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska shall be barred unless brought in the appropriate District Court within 60 days after notice of the availability of such statement is published in the Federal Register.

The detailed environmental studies and assessments that have been conducted on the exploration program and the comprehensive land-use studies carried out in response to sections 105 (b) and (c) of Public Law 94-258 shall be deemed to have fulfilled the requirements of section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (Public Law 91-190), with regard to the first two oil and gas lease sales in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska: *Provided*, That not more than a total of 2,000,000 acres may be leased in these two sales: *Provided further*, That any exploration or production undertaken pursuant to this section shall be in accordance with section 104(b) of the Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act of 1976 (90 Stat. 304; 42 U.S.C. 6504).

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