

South Carolina General Assembly
116th Session, 2005-2006

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H. 4977

STATUS INFORMATION

Joint Resolution

Sponsors: Reps. Cato, Sandifer, Cooper, Barfield, Mitchell, Anthony, Chellis, Delleney, Duncan, Edge, Harrison, Harvin, Jefferson, Jennings, Kennedy, Leach, Mahaffey, McCraw, Norman, Ott, Perry, Rice, Scott, Sinclair, F.N. Smith, J.E. Smith, W.D. Smith, Talley, Townsend, Tripp, Vick, Walker, White and Witherspoon

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Introduced in the House on April 6, 2006

Currently residing in the House Committee on **Labor, Commerce and Industry**

Summary: Natural Gas Exploration Study Committee

HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

Date	Body	Action Description with journal page number
4/6/2006	House	Introduced and read first time HJ-47
4/6/2006	House	Referred to Committee on Labor, Commerce and Industry HJ-47

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VERSIONS OF THIS BILL

[4/6/2006](#)

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A JOINT RESOLUTION

TO CREATE A STUDY COMMITTEE TO EXAMINE THE FEASIBILITY OF NATURAL GAS EXPLORATION IN THE ATLANTIC OCEAN OFF THE COAST OF SOUTH CAROLINA, TO PROVIDE FOR ITS COMPOSITION, APPOINTMENT, POWERS, DUTIES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES, AND TO REQUIRE THE COMMITTEE TO MAKE A REPORT ON ITS RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY BEFORE JANUARY 13, 2007 AT WHICH TIME IT IS DISSOLVED.

Whereas, the Nation is now experiencing rapid increases in the price of energy and the United States is becoming increasingly dependent on foreign energy resources; and

Whereas, domestic natural gas production accounts for over eighty percent of the natural gas supplied to consumers in the United States and increasing domestic gas production is a crucial part of meeting consumer home heating, commercial, and industrial needs at reasonable costs; and

Whereas, the efficiency, cleanliness, and reliability of natural gas has caused it to become an increasingly popular source of energy currently used by more than sixty million American homes and over 600,000 South Carolina homes and businesses; and, therefore, consumption of natural gas is expected to increase forty percent by 2025; and

Whereas, the rising demand for natural gas as a clean-burning fuel source coupled with its tight supply will continue to increase its cost and volatility negatively affecting residential consumers, manufacturing, industrial plants, agriculture, economic growth, consumer spending, and jobs; and

Whereas, the average South Carolina residential gas customer is paying over twice as much for natural gas as they did in 1999; and

Whereas, there are proposals before the United States Congress designed to address the high natural gas price issue by providing flexibility and vast economic incentives to coastal communities and states willing to allow exploration of clean burning natural gas; and

Whereas, the Outer Continental Shelf, which includes South Carolina's 187 miles of coastline, could be viewed as a significant source for increased supply of natural gas to help meet the state's and nation's demand for the long term but is currently under a federal moratorium on offshore oil and gas drilling through 2012; and

Whereas, South Carolina's economy is heavily dependent on coastal tourism which depends upon proper management and ongoing renourishment of the coastal zone and would greatly benefit from a new funding source to preserve beaches and waterways. Now, therefore,

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. (A) There is created a State Government Study Committee to examine and report to the General Assembly on the feasibility of natural gas exploration in the Atlantic coastal waters of the State of South Carolina.

(B) The study committee is comprised of eighteen members to include:

(1) six at-large members to be selected by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and the Secretary of Commerce, including one member designated by the:

(a) Speaker of the House of Representatives representing the state's agricultural industry;

(b) President Pro Tempore of the Senate representing the state's environmental interests;

(c) Secretary of Commerce representing the state's coastal tourism interests;

- (d) Speaker of the House of Representatives representing the state's manufacturing industry;
 - (e) President Pro Tempore of the Senate representing the state's natural gas distributors; and
 - (f) Secretary of Commerce representing the state's economic development interests;
- (2) one member from each of the state's six United States Congressional Districts who must be selected by the members of the General Assembly representing each United States Congressional District;
 - (3) one member from the House of Representatives Minority Party selected by the House Minority Leader;
 - (4) one member from the Senate Minority Party selected by the Senate Minority Leader;
 - (5) one member from the House of Representatives Majority Party selected by the House Majority Leader;
 - (6) one member from the Senate Majority Party selected by the Senate Majority Leader; and
 - (7) the chairman of the House of Representatives Labor Commerce and Industry Committee, or his designee, and the Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, or his designee, shall serve as co-chairmen of the committee.
- (C) The members of the committee shall serve until their successors are appointed and qualified or the committee is dissolved. A vacancy on the committee must be filled in the manner of the original appointment and for the remainder of the unexpired term.
- (D) The committee shall use clerical and professional staff from the Department of Commerce for its staff and also may request the support of the professional and clerical staff of the standing committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate as the committee determines appropriate.
- (E) In conducting its study, the committee shall consider comprehensive implications relating to energy, economic development, tourism, commercial and recreational fishing, the environment, agriculture, manufacturing, public safety, national security, employment, and possible impacts on state and local economies, and shall include recommended legislation that permits drilling for natural gas off the coast of South Carolina.
- (F) The committee shall render its report and recommendations to the General Assembly before January 13, 2007, at which time it is dissolved.

SECTION 2. This joint resolution takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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