SENATE RESOLUTION No. 77

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

214th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JULY 1, 2010

Sponsored by:
Senator JEFF VAN DREW
District 1 (Cape May, Atlantic and Cumberland)
Senator BOB SMITH
District 17 (Middlesex and Somerset)

Co-Sponsored by:
Senators Ruiz, Buono, Beach and Cunningham

SYNOPSIS

Urges DEP to develop contingency plans dealing with Gulf oil spill and accidents to NJ oil refineries.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

A SENATE RESOLUTION calling upon the Department of Environmental Protection to immediately begin developing a contingency plan in the event the oil leaking from the Gulf of Mexico reaches the coastline of New Jersey, and to develop a contingency plan for accidents to oil refinery infrastructure in the State.

WHEREAS, On Tuesday, April 20, 2010, the Deepwater Horizon, an offshore oil rig operated by British Petroleum, exploded and caught fire in the Gulf of Mexico south of Louisiana, and two days later a second explosion caused the rig to sink; and

WHEREAS, This tragic event not only took the lives of 11 crewmembers, but also set in motion a devastating release of oil into the Gulf of Mexico; and

WHEREAS, Estimates have varied considerably on the amount of oil flowing from the Deepwater Horizon drilling pipe, which is approximately 5,000 feet below the surface, and that they range from 210,000 gallons (5,000 barrels) a day to the worst case scenario at 4,200,000 gallons (100,000 barrels) a day; and

WHEREAS, The size of the spill is expanding quickly and has surpassed the 1989 Exxon Valdez incident as the worst oil disaster in United States history; and

WHEREAS, The oil slick continues to spread, and concern is rapidly growing that the spill may be caught by the Loop Current below Louisiana which rounds the Florida Keys and merges with the Gulf Stream Current, which could then carry the oil up the East Coast, bringing this environmental and economic disaster to the coastal waters of New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, The New Jersey Senate recognizes the urgent need to be proactive and prepared for the possibility of the oil making its way to the 127 miles of New Jersey's coastline and its estuaries and territorial waters; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Environmental Protection has the expertise to evaluate the impact of such an occurrence to New Jersey's coastline and to study and assess the solutions available and resources needed to develop a contingency plan to address such an event; and

WHEREAS, In light of the recent events, the need also exists for the Department of Environmental Protection to develop a contingency plan to address potential accidents involving New Jersey’s oil refineries and related infrastructure; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED *by the Senate of the State of New Jersey:*

1. This House calls upon the Department of Environmental Protection to immediately begin developing a contingency plan in the event the oil leaking from the Deepwater Horizon oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico is swept by currents up the eastern seaboard and

appears likely to threaten the coastal waters of New Jersey. In developing this plan, the department should assess the actions being taken to combat this crisis and determine what solutions are successful and what are not and identify the best practices available to address this problem and the resources necessary to carry out this plan.

2. This House also calls upon the Department of Environmental Protection to develop a contingency plan to address potential accidents involving New Jersey's oil refineries and related infrastructure.

3. The Department of Environmental Protection, within 90 days, should submit these contingency plans to the Senate of New Jersey upon completion for its consideration.

STATEMENT

This resolution calls upon the Department of Environmental Protection to immediately develop a contingency plan to deal with the Gulf of Mexico oil spill if it threatens to reach the State's coastline. It also calls upon the department to develop a contingency plan to address potential accidents involving New Jersey's oil refineries and related infrastructure.