

# Bristol Bay oil drilling ban reinstated, for now

The moratorium for oil exploration in the Bristol Bay region was reinstated by the U.S. House Interior Appropriations Committee.

U.S. Representative Don

Young (R-Alaska) said the recent 33 to 20 vote by the House Appropriations Committee will continue the one-year moratorium for Lease Sale #92 in Bristol Bay and other Outer Continental Shelf

(OCS) areas previously protected by Congressional moratoriums.

Young said the House Appropriations Committee "deserves a lot of credit for addressing the concerns of people in areas seeking a continuation of the moratoriums."

"They were in a difficult position of seeking to balance the federal budget while also looking for ways to create revenues for the federal treasury," Young said. "They faced a lot of tough decisions and they should be complimented for listening and working closely with us in making this decision."

Young, who serves as the

Chairman of the House Committee on Resources, had contacted the committee seeking a continuation of the Bristol Bay since 1988.

"Bristol Bay is the world's most important salmon fishery, and deserves every possible protection," Young.

Young said he is supportive of resource development "when it can be conducted in an environmentally sound manner" but that several concerns have been raised about oil exploration and development in Bristol Bay.

Governor Tony Knowles said the vote to restore the Bristol Bay drilling moratorium is a victory

for Alaska. The governor had urged Congress to maintain the existing moratorium against developing oil and gas leases in Bristol Bay and called for Congress to buy the leases back.

The moratorium on developing the North Aleutian Basin leases has been in place since 1989. Some leaseholders have since sued the federal government for the return of the money they bid for the leases. Knowles' letter to Rep. Livingston was dated June 15, 1995. Similar letters objecting to lifting the moratorium were sent to other members of the House appropriations committee in May.