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## House votes to ban drilling under Great Lakes

Monday, November 05, 2001

By Alan Fram, Associated Press

WASHINGTON--The House voted Nov. 3 to ban new oil and gas drilling under the Great Lakes for the next two years, handing a victory to environmentalists over energy industry interests.

President Bush has been trying to boost domestic energy production following this year's energy shortages and the always uncertain political situation in the oil-rich Middle East. But the president has focused more effort on his desire to increase drilling in the Gulf of Mexico and Alaska, and is expected to sign the underlying spending bill anyway.

The language is included in a \$24.6 billion compromise measure financing federal energy and water programs in 2002 that the House approved by 399-29. Senate passage, which is expected quickly, will send the bill to Bush.

That vote came amid a flurry of congressional action on other spending bills for the fiscal year that began Oct. 1.

The House approved a compromise measure providing almost \$3 billion to finance Congress' own operations this year, \$242 million more than last year. The vote was 374-52.

And the Senate continued debating legislation that would provide \$123.1 billion for labor, education and health programs, nearly \$14 billion more than last year.

So far, Congress has completed only two of the 13 annual spending bills for fiscal 2002.

The Great Lakes provision would prevent federal agencies from issuing permits for new drilling there through Sept. 30, 2003, while the government produces a study on the environmental affects such drilling might have.

Until now, the states bordering the Great Lakes have overseen mineral drilling there.

None of them -- New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin and Minnesota -- allow drilling from rigs on the water. Michigan is the only state that allows shoreline drilling that is angled to reach deposits under the lake.

The overall energy and water bill would provide \$573 million more than last year and \$2 billion above Bush's request. It would cut spending aimed at preventing Russian nuclear weapons and expertise from falling into the hands of rogue nations or terrorists, but boost funds for many water projects and renewable energy programs.

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The bill is also packed with billions of dollars worth of water projects and energy research spending for every state in the union, items that perennially make the measure a favorite for lawmakers. Included is \$500,000 for the Hall of Paleontology at Chicago's Field Museum, and \$90 million for cleaning up the site of a former nuclear fuel reprocessing plant in West Valley, N.Y.

The Senate's labor, health and education bill would provide big increases in aid to local school districts and other education programs, and for biomedical research by the National Institutes of Health.

Work on that bill cleared one logjam after senators agreed to drop a pair of controversial provisions on stem cell research and cloning.

But it hit another snag over a proposal by Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, D-S.D., Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., and others to allow police officers, fire fighters and emergency workers in all states to use collective bargaining but not strike. Those workers in 18 states do not have collective bargaining rights, Daschle said.

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