INTERIOR APPROPRIATIONS/Oil Royalty Increase, procedural vote

SUBJECT: **Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 2000 . . . H.R. 2466. Lott motion to reconsider the Lott motion to close debate on the Hutchison amendment No. 1603.**

ACTION: MOTION TO RECONSIDER AGREED TO, 60-39

SYNOPSIS: As amended by a committee substitute amendment, H.R. 2466, the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 2000, will provide $14.058 billion in new budget authority, which is $239.9 million less than provided last year and $1.208 billion less than requested.

The Hutchison amendment would prohibit using funds from this Act to issue a notice of final rulemaking with respect to the valuation of crude oil for royalty purposes. (Oil companies that lease Federal lands for oil production pay royalties on the oil they produce. The royalties, by law, are based on the market value of the oil at the wellhead when it is ready to be sold. In general, the more difficult it is to get oil from a particular wellhead to a refinery, the lower the value that oil will have at the wellhead, because there will be higher transportation, marketing, and other costs to get it to a refinery. The regulatory formula for determining royalty payments that are due is extremely complex. Both oil companies and the Minerals Management Service (MMS) have agreed that the regulations should be simplified. The MMS proposed changes to the regulations 3 years ago. The proposed changes would increase the amount due in royalties by disallowing deductions for marketing and by changing the formula for determining transportation costs. In effect, the MMS proposed collecting royalty taxes on oil based not on its wellhead value but on a value closer to the value it has when it reaches a refinery. In other words, the MMS proposed increasing royalty taxes. One-year moratoriums have been enacted for each of the last 3 years to prevent the new regulations from going into effect.)

On September 13, the Senate failed to invoke cloture on the Hutchison amendment (see vote No. 271). Senator Lott then moved to reconsider that vote. On September 23, Senator Lott moved to proceed to the motion to reconsider the vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the Hutchison amendment (see vote No. 287). After agreeing to proceed to the motion to reconsider, the Senate voted on the motion to reconsider.

(See other side)

YEAS (60)		NAYS (39)		NOT VOTING (1)	
Republicans (55 or 100%)	**Democrats (5 or 11%)**	**Republicans (0 or 0%)**	**Democrats (39 or 89%)**	**Republicans (0)**	**Democrats (1)**
Abraham	Hutchinson	Bingaman	Akaka	Kennedy	
Allard	Hutchison	Breaux	Baucus	Kerrey	
Ashcroft	Inhofe	Inouye	Bayh	Kerry	
Bennett	Jeffords	Landrieu	Biden	Kohl	
Bond	Kyl	Lincoln	Boxer	Lautenberg	
Brownback	Lott		Bryan	Leahy	
Bunning	Lugar		Byrd	Levin	
Burns	Mack		Cleland	Lieberman	
Campbell	McCain		Conrad	Mikulski	
Chafee	McConnell		Daschle	Murray	
Cochran	Murkowski		Dodd	Reed	
Collins	Nickles		Dorgan	Reid	
Coverdell	Roberts		Durbin	Robb	
Craig	Roth		Edwards	Rockefeller	
Crapo	Santorum		Feingold	Sarbanes	
DeWine	Sessions		Feinstein	Schumer	
Domenici	Shelby		Graham	Torricelli	
Enzi	Smith, Bob (I)		Harkin	Wellstone	
Fitzgerald	Smith, Gordon		Hollings	Wyden	
Frist	Snowe		Johnson		
Gorton	Specter				
Gramm	Stevens				
Grams	Thomas				
Grassley	Thompson				
Gregg	Thurmond				
Hagel	Voinovich				
Hatch	Warner				
Helms					

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:
1—Official Business
2—Necessarily Absent
3—Illness
4—Other

SYMBOLS:
AY—Announced Yea
AN—Announced Nay
PY—Paired Yea
PN—Paired Nay

NOTE: When the Senate voted to invoke cloture on the Hutchison amendment, four Senators who supported cloture were absent. Had they been present, cloture would have been invoked. The Majority Leader voted "nay" because only Senators on the prevailing side of a question may move to reconsider a vote. Rollcall votes were held on the motion to proceed to the motion to reconsider and on the motion to reconsider, both of which ordinarily would have been pro forma motions that were agreed to by voice vote, due to the insistence of Senators who wished to delay the reconsideration of the cloture vote (see vote No. 289).

For debate, see vote No. 290.