

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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DOLE AT BOSTON NEWS CONFERENCE CALLS FOR CONGRESS TO FINALLY PASS
LONG-STALLED INTERNATIONAL OIL SPILL CLEAN-UP BILL
INDUSTRY, NOT TAXPAYERS SHOULD FOOT THE BILL, BUT HILL COMMITTEE
DEEP-SIXED LEGISLATION

[ATTENTION NEWS DIRECTORS AND EDITORS: SEN. DOLE WILL HOLD A NEWS CONFERENCE TODAY, JUNE 26, AT 7:00 PM IN ST. GEORGES ROOM D, THE WESTIN HOTEL AT COPLEY PLACE, 10 HUNTINGTON AVENUE, BOSTON.]

BOSTON -- IN THE WAKE OF EVEN MORE OIL SPILLS WASHING UP ON U.S. SHORES, SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER BOB DOLE TODAY URGED CONGRESS TO IMMEDIATELY PASS VITAL OIL SPILL LEGISLATION THAT HAS BEEN BOTTLED UP FOR THE PAST FOUR YEARS. THE LEGISLATION WOULD REQUIRE OIL AND SHIPPING INDUSTRIES WORLDWIDE TO CONTRIBUTE TO AN INTERNATIONAL CLEAN-UP FUND.

"THIS PAST WEEKEND DRAMATICALLY PROVED THAT OIL SPILLS CAN TAKE PLACE AT ANY TIME AND ANY PLACE. IN RHODE ISLAND, THE DELEWARE RIVER AND IN THE HOUSTON SHIPPING CHANNEL, THIS INTERNATIONAL FUND COULD HAVE ALREADY BEEN BATTLING THESE ENVIRONMENTAL NIGHTMARES," DOLE SAID. "BY ENACTING THIS LEGISLATION, WE COULD HAVE ALSO MADE CERTAIN THAT THE INDUSTRY PAYS THE CLEAN-UP TAB WHEREVER ITS OIL CONTAMINATES THE ENVIRONMENT. WE'VE HEARD PLENTY OF RHETORIC ON CAPITOL HILL ABOUT OIL SPILLS, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE CONGRESS MAY HAVE BEEN PART OF THE PROBLEM ALL ALONG."

DOLE WAS IN BOSTON TO ATTEND A RECEPTION IN HONOR OF MASSACHUSETTS HOUSE MINORITY LEADER STEVEN D. PIERCE.

"THE SAD FACT IS, CONGRESS HAS BEEN SITTING ON A BILL THAT WOULD HAVE ALREADY CREATED A RESERVE FUND TO HELP DEAL WITH OIL SPILLS. UNFORTUNATELY, THE BILL HAS BEEN DEEP SIXED IN A SENATE COMMITTEE, THUS EXPOSING TAXPAYERS TO HUGE CLEAN-UP COSTS AND MAKING IT MORE DIFFICULT TO HOLD THE INDUSTRY ACCOUNTABLE."

THE BILL -- THE COMPREHENSIVE OIL POLLUTION LIABILITY AND COMPENSATION ACT (S.1066) -- WOULD IMPLEMENT INTERNATIONAL PROTOCOLS ALREADY SIGNED BY THE U.S. IN 1984 THAT WOULD ESTABLISH A SINGLE INTERNATIONAL RESERVE FUND TO PAY FOR THE CLEAN-UP AND DAMAGES CAUSED BY OIL SPILLS.

THE HOUSE PASSED THE BILL IN THE 99TH CONGRESS, BUT THE SENATE KILLED THE BILL IN COMMITTEE.

CURRENTLY, COUNTRIES ARE ONLY RESPONSIBLE FOR OIL SPILLED IN THEIR OWN WATERS, THUS LEAVING INTERNATIONAL WATERS UNPROTECTED. ADDITIONALLY, UNDER CURRENT LAW, SECTION 311 K OF THE CLEAN WATER ACT, FEDERAL FUNDS ARE USED TO CLEAN UP OIL SPILLS IN U.S. WATERS. WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT THE INDUSTRY CAN BE TAKEN TO COURT FOR DAMAGES, CASES INVOLVING FOREIGN TANKERS MAKE COLLECTION OF COURT AWARDS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT.

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