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## Senators vow to stop potential drilling

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**Vowing to stop potential drilling off the Jersey Shore, senators Jon Corzine and Frank Lautenberg yesterday vowed to fight what they claim is renewed efforts by the federal government to compile an inventory of potential reserves on the Outer Continental Shelf.**

The two veteran Democrats made their announcement in response to a draft energy bill they said is currently being put together in the House and Senate conference.

"We were shocked to learn that the (gas and oil) inventory language is being considered by the conference committee," Corzine and Lautenberg said in a letter sent to U.S. Sen. Pete Domenici and U.S. Rep. William Tauzin, respective chairmen of the Senate and House energy committees.

Corzine went on to claim that the request for inventory was not included in the energy legislation, which passed both houses of Congress earlier this year.

"This is clearly a first step toward drilling off the New Jersey shore, which we strongly oppose, and we urge you to remove this provision," the two Democrat senators wrote.

In a press release sent to The Trentonian, Corzine and Lautenberg said they introduced the Clean Ocean and Safe Tourism Anti-Drilling Act which, if passed, would permanently ban oil and gas drilling off the Jersey shore.

Corzine introduced a similar bill in June 2001 after the Interior Department purportedly made a request to study the impact of drilling off the shore, he said.

The Interior Department's request was canceled when objections were raised, Corzine said.

Allowing an inventory to be compiled would "dramatically change" coastal protection policy and jeopardize sensitive coastal areas and the \$30 billion tourism industry, the senators said.

"As one of the nation's most popular summer vacation destinations, Jersey shore tourism is an economic engine that drives economic growth throughout our region," the senators said.

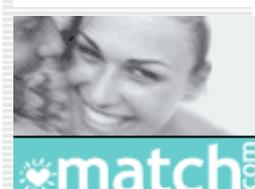
"We believe it is particularly inappropriate to include language that neither the House nor Senate included (in its original bill)" Corzine and Lautenberg said.

Earlier this year, the House voted to eliminate the Outer Continental Shelf inventory from its version of the energy bill, and that version eventually passed the Senate, the senators said.

A moratorium on leasing activities in most Outer Continental Shelf areas has been in effect since 1982.

Former President George H. Bush declared additional leasing moratoriums on many OCS areas in 1990, and that statute was extended by former President Bill Clinton, the senators said.

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