

## TAYLOR ANNOUNCES NEW ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR RICHTON SALT DOME

Department of Energy commits to considering potential environmental consequences

WASHINGTON, DC &ndash; Rep. Gene Taylor announced today that the U.S. Department of Energy has agreed to prepare a new Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to consider the potential environmental consequences of turning the Richton salt dome into a U.S. Strategic Oil Reserve. In the EIS, the department will address and consider relocating the proposed raw water intake on the Leaf River, brine disposal in the Gulf of Mexico and location of the oil terminal in Pascagoula to reduce any potential environmental impact that the project may have. This will include at least one additional public hearing on the project. &ldquo;I have said before that the Department of Energy must do this project right or not do it at all,&rdquo; Rep. Taylor said. Rep. Taylor said that he will only support the project if the department draws the water used to hollow the dome from the Gulf of Mexico instead of the Leaf or Pascagoula Rivers. Also, the department must dispose of the brine well south of the barrier islands and ensure that it is sufficiently diffused to avoid any harmful environmental impact. &ldquo;They&rsquo;ll either do it that way or I will do everything possible to stop it,&rdquo; Rep. Taylor said. &ldquo;The Department of Energy made two mistakes: first, by timing a public hearing right after Hurricane Katrina hit and second, by holding the hearings in Jackson. We are correcting the department&rsquo;s mistakes.&rdquo; In December, Rep. Taylor sent a letter to the department urging the agency to hold additional hearings so that the department could directly hear the questions and concerns of the people of South Mississippi. In addition, Rep. Taylor, along with Senators Cochran and Wicker, sent the department an additional letter asking them to hold more hearings. &ldquo;I was happy to work with both Senator Cochran and Senator Wicker to convince the Department of Energy that additional hearings must be held,&rdquo; Rep. Taylor said. &ldquo;The people of Mississippi have a right to have their voices heard on such an important project that has the potential to impact so many.&rdquo;