

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPUBLICANS

CONGRESSMAN DOC HASTINGS, RANKING MEMBER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, March 25, 2010

CONTACT: [Jill Strait](#) or [Spencer Pederson](#)
202-226-2311

88 House Republicans Send Letter to Salazar Calling on Administration to End “Obama Moratorium” on Offshore Drilling

Delaying until 2012 means no new lease sales will occur during Obama’s term in office

Washington, D.C. – Today, House Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Doc Hastings (WA-04), House Republican Leader John Boehner, House Minority Whip Eric Cantor and 85 other Republicans sent a [letter](#) to Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar demanding that the Administration begin to implement the 2010-2015 five-year lease plan for the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). This plan would open, for the first time in a generation, areas that were made available when Congress lifted the moratorium in 2008. After repeatedly delaying the original 2010-2015 OCS lease plan, Secretary Salazar recently said that the Administration would wait until 2012 to implement a new plan. The establishment of this new two-year “Obama Moratorium” is unacceptable to Republicans in Congress and defies the will of the American people.

“The Obama Administration’s refusal to move forward right now with a new offshore drilling plan is costing American jobs, delaying economic recovery and moving our country further away from energy independence,” said Hastings. “The Administration has dragged its feet on this issue for well over a year – and apparently is content with sitting on the sidelines while gas prices go up. Republicans, however, are not content with doing nothing, and neither are the American people. If President Obama is truly committed to an all-of-the-above energy plan, he will not allow a new plan to be delayed for another two years.”

Full text of letter:

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We strongly object to your recent announcement that the Obama Administration intends to discard the 2010-2015 Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) lease plan and delay implementation of a new leasing plan until 2012. This means that not one lease sale of areas previously under moratoria will occur during President Obama’s entire term in office. This is unacceptable to the overwhelming majority of the American people who support expanded offshore drilling, measured at 68% in one recent poll, and a step backwards from the President’s statements that he wants to improve our nation’s energy security.

While the Administration may not feel the sense of urgency to enact a new five-year plan, the American people do. In 2008, in response to rising prices, the American people called on Congress to act by opening the OCS for exploration and development. The American

people should not have to wait the entire four years of the President's term before any action is taken to explore and develop our precious national oil and gas resources from these new areas. By waiting until 2012, the Administration will unilaterally reinstate the ban on offshore drilling – and do it against the will of the American people.

There is no question that establishment of this new “Obama Moratorium” will have dire impacts on our economic future. These years of delay will directly result in uncreated jobs for unemployed Americans, billions of dollars in lost revenues to the U.S. Treasury, and a greater dependence on unstable foreign sources of oil and natural gas that puts our national security at risk. This action cancels nearly a dozen lease sales in the OCS that were scheduled to begin in July, 2010. The Department's stalling and blockade of new energy production from the OCS endangers tens of thousands of existing jobs, and also prevents the creation of new jobs that would help lower our nation's nearly ten percent unemployment rate. Opening new areas to drilling and job creation would be a no-cost stimulus for the U.S. economy.

Congress' intent of opening the OCS was to offer as much of the newly available 500 million acres, which contain at least 14 billion barrels of oil and 55 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, for new American energy production. It should be the policy of the Administration to execute the will of Congress and the American people. Instead, the Administration is poised to use their new plan timeline as a backdoor opportunity to reinstate a moratorium that closes off wide expanses of the OCS. It is not too late to reverse this course of action, abandon this “Obama Moratorium,” and implement the 2010-2015 plan beginning in July to help create jobs and new American-made energy production.

#

<http://republicans.resourcescommittee.house.gov>

[Facebook](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Twitter](#)