



Committee on Natural Resources U.S. House of Representatives

Chairman Doc Hastings

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Chairman Hastings: Republican Plan Unlocks American Energy Resources, Creates American Jobs

“Offshore energy production has steadily declined under the Obama Administration and it’s time to reverse that trend.”

WASHINGTON, D.C. – House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04) delivered the following floor statement today in support of H.R. 2231, the *Offshore Energy and Jobs Act*:



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“Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2231, the Offshore Energy and Jobs Act.

Unlike the President’s plan we heard this week, which is to impose new energy taxes and federal red-tape that will increase energy prices and cost American jobs, this Republican plan will expand access to our own U.S. energy resources in order to lower energy prices and increase American jobs.

Gas prices have nearly doubled since President Obama took office. The national average today remains above \$3.50 per gallon, compared to \$1.89 when he took office. We shouldn't have to accept potentially \$4 a gallon gas prices, especially when we have resources here at home. Higher gas prices force many to have to make tough budgeting choices. For small businesses, it may be the difference between hiring more workers or having to let some go. For families, it may be the difference between replacing a worn out household appliance, or making do with makeshift repairs. This is why access to afford energy is so vital.

For decades, most of our nation's offshore areas were under moratoria – preventing any offshore development. All of that changed in the summer of 2008 when outrageously high gas prices made our nation's energy struggles a regular topic of conversation around the dinner table of American families. Later that year, Congress and then-President Bush lifted those moratoria with the hopes of fostering an era of increased American energy production.

President Obama came into office with a tremendous opportunity. For the first time in more than a generation he had the ability to open new offshore areas to oil and natural gas production. Sadly, instead, he went out of his way to shut down this opportunity by putting forward a five-year offshore leasing plan that locks-up 85 percent of our offshore areas. The plan includes no-new drilling, which results in no-new American jobs. In fact, it includes the lowest number of lease sales ever offered in an offshore lease plan – a record worse than even President Jimmy Carter's.

Mr. Chairman, we must do better. That's why we are here today to consider the Offshore Energy and Jobs Act. This legislation puts us back on the right path – one that will open new areas to drilling, one that will create 1.2 million American jobs, one that will lower energy prices and one that will generate \$1.5 billion in new revenue. But it's not only energy jobs that will be created – its associated industries like manufacturing, boating, transportation, and service industries like hotels and restaurants that will all benefit.

This legislation requires the Administration to implement a new five-year leasing plan that includes areas with the most oil and natural gas resources – such as the Mid-Atlantic, Alaska and Southern California. This is not a drill everywhere plan, but rather a drill-smart plan that focuses on those areas where the greatest potential lies.

It would also require specific lease sales to be held off the coasts of South Carolina and Virginia – the latter of which was originally scheduled to take place in 2011 but was canceled by the Obama Administration. There is bipartisan support in favor of the Virginia lease sale, but the Obama Administration canceled it and punted any future sales until after 2017.

The bill also establishes a fair and equitable revenue sharing program with all coastal states that have drilling off their coasts – much like what Gulf States currently receive. Revenue sharing will create new incentives for opening offshore areas to drilling. Again, more American energy production equates to more jobs and a stronger economy.

Finally, the bill includes reforms to further enhance the accountability, efficiency, safety

and ethical standards of offshore energy operations. These reforms will allow for the robust production of our Nation's offshore energy resources, while ensuring that all activity is conducted with proper oversight.

Offshore energy production has steadily declined under the Obama Administration and it's time to reverse that trend. H.R. 2231 will remove government barriers that are currently blocking access to our American energy resources. It will safely and responsibly unlock our energy and allow us to create over a million new American jobs.

I urge my colleagues to support the Offshore Energy and Jobs Act and reserve the balance of my time.”

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