



September 16, 2009

Highlights from Secretary Salazar's Testimony Before the House Natural Resources Committee

Today, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar testified before the House Natural Resources Committee on the Democrats' Roadblock to Energy Bill (H.R. 3534). Below are excerpts of questions and answers between Secretary Salazar and members of the committee on key issues including H.R. 3534, oil and natural gas production, the man-made California drought, and renewable energy. Watch the videos to view the complete exchange.

Says Rearranging Bureaucracy Doesn't Serve Government & the People

NOTE: H.R. 3534 would establish a new bureaucratic office within the Interior Department that would be responsible for all renewable and non-renewable energy and mineral leasing activities on federal land that is currently handled by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Mineral Management Service (MMS).

Rep. Herseth-Sandlin: "How long would you anticipate a reorganization to take?...and what the reorganization would cost the tax payers?"

Sec. Salazar: "We are taking a look at those issues right now. I will give you my philosophical approach to the whole concept of reorganization. **I don't think it does our government a lot of good, and the people that we serve, simply by rearranging the boxes.**" ([Watch Video](#))

Declines to Confirm If H.R. 3534 Will Speed Up Energy Production

Rep. Lummis: "Do you believe this new department would speed or slow the development of the approximately 70% of Wyoming's natural gas production and 65% percent of Wyoming's oil production that occurs on federal lands? And how?"

Sec. Salazar: "**Whether it would slow it up or speed it up. My answer to that is we have to get it right.** I think the most important thing this bill is doing for us right now is it's putting the spotlight on an issue that needed the spotlight put on it." ([Watch Video](#))

Discusses Administration Inaction on the Man-Made California Drought

Rep. McClintock: "Mr. Secretary, do you deny that more than 200 billion gallons of water have been diverted from the Central Valley to meet environmental regulations protecting the Delta Smelt?"

Sec. Salazar: "The situation in California is frankly in chaos... We are in the third year of drought and at the end of the day developing a

comprehensive solution that addresses the conservation needs of the Bay Delta as well as providing additional water supply is an agenda that we have to figure out together.”

Rep. McClintock: “No one would argue for the need for additional water facilities, but I think you’d have to agree that 200 billion gallons of water would have made all the difference in the world in the Central Valley, if it hadn’t been diverted for the Delta Smelt.”

Sec. Salazar: “My own view, I’ve said this before and I’ll say it here today that that is an admission of failure...”

Rep. McClintock: “**I think the Central Valley would define failure as 40% unemployment in Mendota and an agricultural industry that has literally been brought to its knees. Thank you.**”
[\(Watch Video\)](#)

Agrees 300,000 Wind Mills off the Atlantic Are Not Realistic

Rep. Lamborn: “**You’ve made mention in your comments about up to a thousand gigawatts of wind potential off of the Atlantic coast...to produce a thousand gigawatts, you would have to have 300,000 windmills off of the Atlantic coast and almost that same number off the Pacific coast. And with roughly... 1,800 miles of coast off the Atlantic, you’d have 166 towers per every mile of shore. Now of course that might go out 10 or 20 miles, but still you’re talking about a tremendous crowding affect, I think, and possibly a tremendous environmental impact just that sheer number of towers with all of that infrastructure that goes into each one of those.**

“I personally don’t think that it’s realistic to look for 1,000 gigawatts off the Atlantic coast. I wish it was. I don’t want to see us ignore oil and gas when we’re pursuing what to me is, pardon the pun you know tilting at windmills, pursuing something that’s not going to pan out. So do you agree with me that off the Atlantic and Pacific coast we should have oil and gas in addition to whatever we might in the future obtain from wind or solar?”

Sec. Salazar: “Let me just say this about wind energy off the offshore of the Atlantic. **It is absolutely true, there is no way that we are going to stand up the renewable energy potential in offshore wind that the lab in Colorado – the national renewable energy lab – has said is there.** They have said it is almost 1,000 gig off the Atlantic.” [\(Watch Video\)](#)

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