

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPUBLICANS

CONGRESSMAN DOC HASTINGS, RANKING MEMBER

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Offshore Drilling Ban Lifted Last Year, But Salazar Says Administration May Not Open Any New Areas To Drilling Until 2012

Hastings: This is unacceptable and irresponsible energy policy

WASHINGTON, D.C. –House Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Doc Hastings (WA-04) issued the following statement today regarding reports that the Obama Administration may not complete a new Outer Continental Shelf lease plan until 2012:

“Yesterday, during Secretary Salazar’s testimony before the House Natural Resources Committee, Republicans repeatedly asked him for specific details on his Department’s upcoming decision regarding the 2010-2015 Outer Continental Shelf lease plan. Time and time again, Secretary Salazar refused to provide any candid information about the Administration’s plans.

“But 24 hours later, Secretary Salazar told reporters that it’s possible the Administration may not complete a new plan until 2012. This means that a six month public comment period will soon become a three-year ban on offshore drilling. This is unacceptable and irresponsible energy policy. It will cost American jobs, hurt our economy and increase our dependence on foreign oil. It’s also hypocritical in light of President Obama’s [statement](#) that ‘if we’ve got some (oil and gas) here in the United States that we can use, we should find it.’

“The American people have spoken loud and clear about their support for all-of-the-above energy development. If the Administration refuses to move forward with a new plan for expanded offshore oil and natural gas production, it will essentially reinstate the moratoria that was lifted last year by Congress and the previous Administration.

“The responsibility now lies squarely at the feet of President Obama and the Department of the Interior. Administration officials can either choose to expand American oil and gas development and create new jobs – or continue to increase our dependence on foreign oil.”

BACKGROUND

[OFFSHORE DRILLING: Salazar won't commit to putting new plan in place before 2012](#)

September 17, 2009

Ben Geman, E&E News

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar today said it remains unclear whether offshore leasing plans

his agency is crafting will supplant the existing 2007-2012 outer continental shelf program or take effect afterward.

Interior is currently taking comments on a Bush-era proposal to greatly expand outer continental shelf leasing, including opening areas off the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. The comment period for that plan, which would set lease sales between 2010-2015 and thereby replace much of the current program, ends Sept. 21.

Salazar told reporters today that he is not certain whether his agency will seek to have a new plan take effect before the existing leasing program runs out.

"That plan is in place until 2012. So, in a legal sense, we have until 2012 to redo a plan on the outer continental shelf," Salazar said this morning. "Whether we take that long or not is something we'll decide based on the information we collected and the analysis that's been done during this period. I haven't yet reached a decision yet on what the next steps are going to be."

He said waiting until 2012 for a new plan to take effect is "one of the possibilities" but added "we may end up doing something a lot sooner than that, just within that time frame." While Interior is unlikely to adopt the Bush-era proposal wholesale, it remains unclear what, if any, expansions of OCS leasing that Interior might endorse.

Reporter Eric Bontrager contributed.

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