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[Will The Obama Administration’s Hypocrisy on Energy Policy Extend to OCS Drilling?](#)

By Rep. Doc Hastings

Clean Skies

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On issue after issue, the Obama Administration has quickly earned a reputation of saying one thing, but doing another. Some of the most glaring examples of the Administration’s hypocrisy can be found in the development of its so-called “comprehensive” energy policy.

Over the past eight months, President Obama, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and other Administration officials have repeatedly expressed their strong support for all types of American energy – including oil and natural gas. Unfortunately, their rhetoric hasn’t matched reality.

Rather than taking steps to develop a wide array of American energy sources, the Administration has withdrawn oil and gas leases in Utah, enacted a defacto ban on offshore energy development on America’s Outer Continental Shelf, delayed oil shale research, and proposed new taxes on oil and natural gas production. If this is the Administration’s idea of support for comprehensive energy development, I would hate to see their idea of opposition.

Last week, Administration officials took this hypocrisy to a whole new level.

On September 17th, Vice President Biden traveled to Iraq to persuade the Iraqi government to develop more oil and create new drilling jobs in Iraq. As one “Senior American official” traveling with the Vice President told the Agence French Press “even one other deal would mean 50 to 60 billion dollars in additional investment in Iraq, 600 million dollars in additional annual revenue, and tens of thousands of additional jobs.”

But back in the United States, where unemployment is approaching 10 percent and the Obama-Pelosi deficit is expected to top \$9.1 trillion, another Administration official lacked the same enthusiasm for American oil and gas development. In fact, on the same day that Vice President Biden was actively encouraging Iraqis to develop their own resources, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar told reporters that the Administration may wait until 2012 before implementing a new offshore drilling plan for America’s Outer Continental Shelf. This would mean that the offshore drilling ban that was lifted by the previous

Administration and Congress would remain in place for three more years.

It's too bad there wasn't a "Senior American official" nearby to remind reporters that American drilling deals would mean billions of dollars in additional investment in America, millions of dollars in additional annual revenue, and tens of thousands of additional jobs.

Today, September 21st, marks the end of the Administration's extended public comment period on the draft proposed 2010-2015 Outer Continental Shelf plan. After six months of delay, the Administration will now have to make a decision that will truly reflect its commitment to a comprehensive energy policy. Will it allow Americans to responsibly develop our own resources and create new jobs? Will it only offer up a small area for new production? Or will it completely obstruct new oil and gas drilling?

If past is prologue, President Obama, Secretary Salazar and other Administration officials will most likely use their power to prevent new American oil and gas development. But only time will tell.

As Administration officials consider their options, they should remember that the average cost of gas won't always average around \$2.55 a gallon. Before we know it, the American people will be forced to pay more at the pump again. And when they reach for their wallets, they'll ask "why didn't the Administration and Congress take action to actually increase all types of domestic energy?" Americans won't like the answer.

And unless the Administration and Democrat Leaders in Congress actually support all-of-the-above energy development, they'll have to explain that they were too busy trying to promote foreign energy development and pass a National Energy Tax bill that the Administration's own numbers confirm will actually cost the average American family over \$1760 a year.

Republicans on the House Natural Resources Committee will continue to call on the Administration and Members of Congress to support the American Energy Act, a Republican all-of-the-above energy solution that includes specific measures to encourage development of renewable energy sources, such as wind, solar, hydropower, nuclear and biomass, while also producing more American-made oil and natural gas. This bill will ensure that our Nation finally has a real comprehensive energy strategy that will responsibly use our natural resources to create new jobs, produce more energy, reduce our dependence on foreign oil and make our environment cleaner.

Hastings is the Ranking Member of the House Natural Resources Committee.

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House Natural Resources Committee Republican Press Office

Contact: [Emily Lawrimore](#) or [Jill Strait](#)

202-226-2311

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