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[Obama USDA delays shale drilling, up to 200k jobs](#)

By Joel Gehrke
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President Obama's United States Department of Agriculture has delayed shale gas drilling in Ohio for up to six months by cancelling a mineral lease auction for Wayne National Forest (WNF). The move was taken in deference to environmentalists, on the pretext of studying the effects of hydraulic fracturing.

"Conditions have changed since the 2006 Forest Plan was developed," announced WNF Supervisor Anne Carey on Tuesday. "The technology used in the Utica & Marcellus Shale formations need to be studied to see if potential effects to the surface are significantly different than those identified in the Forest Plan." The study will take up to six months to complete. The WNF study reportedly "will focus solely on how it could affect forest land," despite the significance of hydraulic fracturing to united proponents of the delay, "and not how it could affect groundwater."

Speaking of the WNF gas drilling, one environmentalist group spokesman suggested that moving forward with drilling "could turn the Ohio Valley into Ozone Alley," even though Wayne National Forest already has nearly 1300 oil and gas wells in operation.

The Ohio Oil and Gas Energy Education Program (OOGEEP) recently estimated that drilling in the Utica shale, which is affected by the suspension of the mineral lease auctions, would produce up 204,500 jobs by 2015.

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that would lessen our dependence on hostile Middle Eastern oil."

Salazar denied that suggestion, noting the sales of mineral leases over the last two years, but he also affirmed environmentalist concerns. "The increasing use of hydraulic fracturing has raised a number of concerns about the potential impacts on water quality and availability, particularly with respect to the chemical composition of fracturing fluids and the methods used."

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