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[Guest Blogger: Rep. Doc Hastings \(R-WA\) on Energy Security](#)

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One year ago today, a bipartisan Congress voted to lift the ban on oil and gas drilling off America's coasts and cleared the way for our Nation to responsibly develop more of our own energy resources, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and create new jobs.

Next, the Bush Administration put forward a robust plan that would open up additional areas to drilling on the United States Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). However, immediately after taking office, the Obama Administration threw up a giant roadblock on the path to new American energy jobs. Instead of opening up the OCS for more oil and natural gas production, the Administration enacted a de-facto ban on new offshore drilling by extending the public comment period on the OCS plan for an additional six months.

The public comment process recently ended on September 21st. The Administration must decide if it will responsibly develop our own resources, only offer up a small area for new production, or continue to completely obstruct new oil and gas drilling.

As unemployment approaches ten percent, Republicans have regularly reminded President Obama and Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar that expanded domestic energy development would deliver tremendous economic benefits to the American people by creating 1.2 million jobs annually across the country and generating \$2.2 trillion in total tax receipts towards the \$9.1 trillion Obama-Pelosi deficit.

But, in light of the recent news that Iran has constructed a second nuclear facility, it's critical that the Administration also view its current energy policy through the prism of national security. The President and his national security team must be able to implement the strongest, most effective sanctions against Iran and other countries that threaten the safety of Americans, as well as Israel and other allies.

However, as sanctions are considered against Iran, President Obama and his national security team will likely take into account that Iran controls the Strait of Hormuz, which the

Energy Information Administration (EIA) describes as “the world’s most important oil chokepoint due to its daily oil flow of 16.5-17 million barrels, which is roughly 40 percent of all seaborne traded oil (or 20 percent of oil traded worldwide).”

In the past, when threatened with sanctions, Iran has countered with threats to close the Strait of Hormuz – a move that would threaten the international oil market and spike energy costs.

When our country has its own rich oil and natural gas resources, we should not have to even think about unpredictable threats from mad men, tyrants and dictators who control access to a significant portion of the world’s oil supply. The American Outer Continental Shelf is estimated to contain 86 billion barrels of oil and 420 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. If the Administration would allow our Nation to fully and responsibly tap into these resources, we could drastically decrease our dependence on foreign oil.

While the Obama Administration has said it supports all-of-the-above energy development, it has shown zero signs of moving forward with a robust plan for any new domestic energy development on our Outer Continental Shelf. In fact, Secretary Salazar recently suggested that the Administration may not move forward with a new plan before 2012.

And ironically, while shunning domestic oil and gas development, Administration officials have championed foreign oil production.

In August, the Wall Street Journal reported that “the U.S. is going to lend billions of dollars to Brazil’s state-owned oil company, Petrobras, to finance exploration of the huge offshore discovery in Brazil’s Tupi oil field in the Santos Basin near Rio de Janeiro.” This massive oil field in the Atlantic Ocean is estimated to contain between 5-8 billion barrels in this single field, making it one of the world’s largest discoveries.

And in September, 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.”

Money for offshore oil drilling in Brazil and support for new energy jobs in Iraq? Enough is enough.

Instead of more rhetoric and double standards, the Administration needs to finally support comprehensive energy development in America. Republicans proposed the American Energy Act, an all-of-the-above energy bill that will reduce our dependence on foreign oil and create green jobs, drilling jobs, manufacturing jobs and nuclear jobs. We encourage Democrats to support this positive alternative. Our economy and our national security depend upon it.

Congressman Doc Hastings is the Ranking Member on the House Natural Resources Committee.

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