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69 Members Send Bipartisan Letter Urging the President's Ocean Policy Task Force Not to Block Offshore Energy Development

"It is critical that the Task Force's proposals do not inhibit energy activity offshore in domestic waters and undermine the Department of the Interior's Five Year Leasing Program for offshore energy development."

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, House Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Doc Hastings (WA-04), Congressman Bill Cassidy (LA-06) and 67 bipartisan Members of Congress sent a letter to Nancy Sutley, Chairwoman of the President's Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force, expressing concerns that the Task Force's Interim Report is not balanced and could be used to block offshore energy development and job creation. [Click here to view the letter.](#)

"As the Task Force works to develop its final recommendations, they must recognize the importance of maintaining the multiple uses of our oceans," said Ranking Member Hastings. "From fishing to energy development to recreation, our oceans are an integral part of our economy and support millions of jobs across the country. We can protect our oceans without inflicting more economic damage in the middle of a serious recession. Members from both sides of the aisle will strongly oppose any efforts by the Administration to use this report as means of establishing a backdoor moratorium on offshore energy development."

"On the whole, this report reflects an ideology that is at odds with American energy independence and job creation in the energy economy," said Rep. Cassidy. "Responsible stewardship of our oceans and the responsible use of ocean resources are not conflicting aims. We don't have to choose one or the other."

Background

In June 2009, President Obama issued a [memorandum](#), which created the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force and directed them to recommend national policy for the management of our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes.

In September 2009, the Task Force released an [Interim Report](#) that proposes a system of ocean governances. The Task Force is scheduled to release final recommendations on December 9, 2009, which could establish an unprecedented zoning system for our oceans.

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