

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, February 15, 2011
[PERMALINK](#)

CONTACT: [Jill Strait](#) or [Spencer Pederson](#)
202-226-9019

Interior Dept. Announces Delays to U.S. Oil Shale Production

“With the price of gasoline on the rise and our increased reliance on unstable foreign sources of energy, this Administration shouldn’t be taking actions that make those problems worse.”

WASHINGTON, D.C. – House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04) released the following statement after Interior Secretary Ken Salazar announced that the Department plans to review the current rules for commercial oil shale leasing:

“This redundant step is yet another example of the Obama Administration proactively stopping American job-creating energy projects before they can begin. The current commercial rules for oil shale leasing were adopted under a rigorous and open public rule making process. There is no need to review the rules unless their intention is to halt progress on the development of our oil shale resources and create more uncertainty for companies interested in investing in new technology.

“Since taking office, the Obama Administration has done nothing but hinder the production of U.S. oil shale. Their actions only serve to delay the development of at least a trillion barrels of U.S. oil resources and prevent the creation of thousands of new U.S. jobs. With the price of gasoline on the rise and our increased reliance on unstable foreign sources of energy, this Administration shouldn’t be taking actions that make those problems worse.”

Background

A month after taking office, the Obama Administration announced [delays](#) in the new round of oil shale RD&D leases that would help advance American technology and create high-tech jobs in Colorado, Wyoming and Utah.

In October 2009, the Interior Department [announced](#) a new round of RD&D leases that included significant changes to the program. The new program decreased lease acreage by 87 percent, demanded unrealistic timelines for investment into cutting edge research, included unattainable production requirements, and implanted variable royalty rates. As a result, only three companies [applied](#) for this latest round of RD&D leases.

According to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) the U.S. holds more than half of the world’s oil shale resources. The largest known deposits of oil shale are located in a 16,000-square mile area in the Green River formation in Colorado, Utah and Wyoming. The USGS’s most recent estimates (April, 2009) show the region may hold more than 1.5 trillion barrels of oil – six times Saudi Arabia’s proven resources, and enough to provide the United States with energy for the next 200 years.

###