

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPUBLICANS

CONGRESSMAN DOC HASTINGS, RANKING MEMBER

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CONTACT: [Emily Lawrimore](#) or [Jill Strait](#)  
202-226-2311

## **Hastings and House Republicans Call Upon Salazar to Allow Central Gulf Oil and Gas Lease to Occur As Scheduled**

**WASHINGTON D.C.** – House Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Doc Hastings (WA-04) and other House Republicans issued the following statements after delivering the attached letter to Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar regarding their support for the upcoming Central Gulf Oil and Gas Lease Sale 208 to occur as scheduled on March 18, 2009.

*“When many Americans are worried about rising unemployment rates and high energy bills, the Federal Government should take every opportunity to help create new jobs and expand domestic energy production. The good news is that the Department of Interior currently has an oil and gas lease sale on schedule that would deliver new jobs to the Central Gulf region and increase American-made energy, This sale should move forward without delay.”*

**Ranking Member Doc Hastings (WA-04)**

*“At a time when American families and small businesses are hurting, we must create jobs and grow our economy. We can achieve both those goals by responsibly increasing exploration and production of our natural resources, including those offshore. I urge Secretary Salazar to stand up to special interests and put American jobs and lower energy costs for American working families first. He has the opportunity to move forward in a positive way with the upcoming Central Gulf Oil and Gas Lease Sale. The Sale means jobs and energy independence for America’s families.”* – **Congressman Doug Lamborn (CO-05)**

*“The rich supplies of oil and natural gas that lie off our coasts are vital to American energy independence as well as our economic health. We have within our reach valuable resources that will provide massive job creation, lower energy costs, and huge revenue for our national treasury – exactly what we need during this difficult economic time. However, our government is actively putting more and more of our energy resources off limits every month. Further delay of this lease sale basically tells the world that our U.S. government refuses to allow our nation to help heal its own economic problems without great pain. If we want to see this economy rebound, if we want to provide real jobs and security for American families, we absolutely should not delay this lease sale.”* – **Congressman Louie Gohmert (TX-01)**

*“Louisiana is the number one producer of crude oil and the number two producer of natural gas in America. Over 320,000 Louisianans work in the energy industry, generating around \$12 billion a year in household income. These are well-paying jobs for people like welders, pipe fitters, barge workers, and the thousands of people who work in industries that support the energy sector. Our state’s budget, which is facing a \$2 billion shortfall, also depends*

*heavily on revenues from energy production. Louisiana workers need this sale to go forward. Our economy, thousands of jobs, and funding for critical government services depend on it.”* - **Congressman Bill Cassidy (LA-06)**

*“In my home state of Louisiana, oil and gas production means jobs, royalties and tax revenue to the state. Delaying this upcoming legislation will halt the domestic production of oil and natural gas in our country. The continuous attempts to shut down Gulf Coast leasing and production will ultimately result in some of the same spikes in energy costs Americans felt this past year. Delaying more legislation in favor of exploring our offshore resources, coupled with excise taxation on this industry will result in driving us deeper into this recession and delay energy independence. It is past time that we get serious about reducing our dependence on foreign oil and expand domestic production.”* - **Congressman John Fleming (LA-04)**

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