



Tuesday, March 6, 2012

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5 Energy Questions for President Obama

This afternoon President Obama will hold a press conference to discuss, among other issues, rising gas prices. Here are five questions President Obama should answer regarding his Administration's energy policy:

- 1. Gas prices have doubled since you took office and the average price of gas has already surpassed \$4 in some areas. Will you now support a bipartisan plan passed by the House of Representatives to increase production of our own American energy resources?**
 - Last month, the House passed a [bipartisan plan](#) to expand offshore energy production, open less than three percent of ANWR for oil and natural gas production, encourage the development of 1.5 trillion barrels of oil shale in the Rocky Mountain West, and approve the Keystone XL pipeline.
 - The plan will create over 1.2 million jobs, raise over \$4.3 billion in new federal revenues, help lower gasoline prices and strengthen our national and economic security.
- 2. When you took office, nearly all of our offshore areas were open to American energy production and there was a plan in place to hold specific lease sales. You have since thrown out that plan, canceled lease sales and finally proposed a new plan that only allows production to occur in the Gulf of Mexico and parts of the Arctic. With gas prices rising and turmoil in the Middle East, why are you actively blocking access to American offshore energy resources?**
 - The Obama Administration has released a [draft offshore drilling five-year lease plan](#) that CLOSES the majority of the OCS to new energy production through 2017.
 - There is LESS offshore acreage open for energy production now than there was when President Obama took office when nearly 100% of the OCS was open for production.
 - The Administration's draft five-year plan prohibits offshore drilling in NEW areas and only allows lease sales to occur in areas that are already open.
 - President Obama is being misleading by saying that 75% of our offshore "resources" are open. The REAL number should be acres—of the 1.76 billion acres in the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf, only 38 million acres—or a mere 2.16%—is actually leased for energy development.
- 3. What specifically has your Administration done to contribute to increased production of oil and natural gas?**
 - Increases in onshore or offshore oil and natural gas production can be attributed to previous Presidents Clinton and Bush's pro-energy policies and the significant increase in energy production on state and private lands.

- [Greenwire](#) recently reported that *“Domestic oil production may be at an all-time high nationwide, but the increase is primarily occurring on state and private lands rather than on federal land and waters, where production appears to have dropped significantly in 2011, according to the most recent government data. Production of natural gas on public lands and waters in fiscal 2011 dropped 11 percent from the previous year, according to Interior Department data. Oil production dipped nearly 14 percent. The reduction in oil production was most significant in the Gulf of Mexico, where it declined nearly 17 percent to 514 million barrels from 618 million barrels in 2010.”*
- The total onshore acreage leased under the Obama Administration in 2009 and 2010 is the lowest in over two decades, stretching back to at least 1984. Under the Obama Administration, 2010 had the **LOWEST** number of [onshore leases](#) issued since 1984.

4. Does your newly claimed support for ‘all-of-the-above’ energy include coal?

- Almost immediately after taking office, the Obama Administration began rewriting a recently completed coal regulation. This unnecessary action, carried out through the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, proposed to dramatically alter a regulation that that took over five years of environmental analysis and careful scientific consideration to complete.
- An analysis by contractors hired to conduct the rewrite found the new regulations could cost up to 7,000 direct coal mining jobs and cause economic harm to 22 states across the country.
- A recent study by [ENVIRON](#) calculated that over 55,000 directing mining jobs and more than 270,000 total jobs could be at risk as a result of the implementation of this proposed regulation.

5. Will you cave to political pressure from Congressional Democrats and once again tap the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) to respond to high gas prices?

- Last year, President Obama sold 30 million barrels of oil from the SPR in response to the conflict in Libya and it had no lasting effect on gas prices.
- The SPR was created for national security emergencies, major supply shut-downs, cut-offs or disasters.
- On Monday, oil historian Daniel Yergin told [Politico](#) there was no need to tap the SPR. *“There is no cause yet for President Barack Obama to tap into the Strategic Petroleum Reserve...oil historian Daniel Yergin said Monday. ‘I don’t think so,’ Yergin said. ‘I mean, there’s no shortage of oil right now.’”*
- Tapping the SPR may provide political relief for the President, but it will endanger our long-term energy security. Instead, we should be increasing production of American energy resources.

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