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All 20 Republicans on Natural Resources Committee Call for Hearing on Obama's Anti-Energy OCS Plan

President's action blocks new job creation as gas prices keep climbing higher

WASHINGTON D.C. – House Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Doc Hastings (WA-04) along with all of his Republican colleagues on the Committee today sent a [letter](#) to Natural Resources Committee Chairman Nick Rahall requesting a Full Committee hearing on President Obama's offshore drilling announcement from March 31st. The President's plan will lock up a majority of the Outer Continental Shelf from oil and gas production and implement a two year "Obama Moratorium" by delaying action on a new five -year leasing plan until 2012.

"In these difficult economic times of nearly 10 percent unemployment and with the nation experiencing rising gasoline prices, it's critical that the Committee act to examine the Administration's actions and their impact on new job creation," wrote the Republican coalition in the letter.

The letter calls for Department of the Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, White House Advisor Carol Browner, and Minerals Management Service Director Elizabeth Birnbaum to testify as witnesses at the hearing, as well as a second panel of experts to address the harmful economic impacts of the new plan.

A copy of the letter can be found [here](#).

Background

- President Obama did not open new lands to offshore drilling – all of these areas were already open for drilling once Congress and President Bush lifted the moratorium in 2008. Instead, President Obama announced what areas he would **CLOSE** to offshore drilling ([see maps](#)).
- Under the President's Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) plan, over 360 million acres are now under a new "Obama Moratorium" that blocks American energy production. This represents nearly 60% of the OCS in the Lower 48 States.
- In total, the Obama OCS plan puts 13.14 billion barrels of oil and 41.49 trillion cubic feet of natural gas under lock and key.

- The President’s announcement included only two actual lease sales – Virginia and Cook Inlet –both of which he delayed from 2010 until 2011.
- The Administration will only study the other areas (Mid-Atlantic, Southern Atlantic, Chukchi and Beaufort Sea). **It has NO actual lease sales planned for these areas.** There is no guarantee that drilling will ever occur there.
- Drilling in a small portion of the Eastern Gulf of Mexico can only happen if Congress lifts the ban that is in place until 2022. The Administration has not sent proposed language to make this change to Congress yet.
- The entire Pacific Coast is now off limits. The Pacific Coast alone holds an estimated 10.5 billion barrels of oil – almost 75 percent of the total amount available off the U.S. coastline in former moratoria areas and 18 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.
- The Eastern Gulf of Mexico mileage restrictions specifically exclude the “Destin Dome” area. This area contains enough natural gas to supply gas to a million American families for 30 years. It is located close to infrastructure and could be quickly developed, creating jobs and wealth for the American people.
- The entire North Atlantic planning area is now closed to any consideration or exploration, although according to the MMS it holds the largest prospective gas resources outside of the Gulf of Mexico in the lower 48 states. Meanwhile in February, the liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal in Everett, Massachusetts started taking imports of LNG from Yemen, the home of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.
- According to a [recent poll](#), 72 percent of Americans are in favor of increased offshore drilling, while 59 percent support drilling off the coasts California and the New England states – areas specifically exempted from any future drilling by Obama’s new OCS plan.

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