

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, May 11, 2009

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

Republicans Call on Administration to Take Action to Put Offshore Drilling Plan Back In Place

Administration Should End Silence on Court Decision

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, House Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Doc Hastings and Representatives Bill Cassidy, Don Young, John Fleming, Louie Gohmert, Rob Bishop, Doug Lamborn, Steve Scalise and Jason Chaffetz sent the attached letter to Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar regarding the Administration's inaction on a recent court decision that vacated the current 2007-2012 offshore oil and natural gas leasing plan.

LETTER EXCERPTS

ADMINISTRATION'S RHETORIC VERSUS ACTION ON AMERICAN ENERGY

"If left unaddressed, the court decision becomes a de facto ban on any new offshore drilling. The Administration frequently expresses its support for offshore development and the importance of oil and gas production to the American economy. However, the Administration's words are rarely matched by substantive action that will increase American energy production. The Department now has a clear opportunity to turn words into action by restoring the 2007-2012 offshore leasing program now. In addition to reinstating the current program, the federal government should also move quickly to open new areas to development previously kept off limits by the current government moratoria."

JOB AND ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

"Millions of Americans depend on the (OCS) leasing program for their livelihood. It is a major source of revenue for our national and state governments and a future energy lifeline to the American people. American oil and gas production provides over a million American jobs. And the action by this court, and a failure to reinstitute the plan by the Administration, endangers the jobs of tens of thousands of geologists, engineers, and dock workers in the industry, as well as millions of Americans who depend on the availability of affordable energy."

OCS FEDERAL REVENUE IN COMPARISON TO ADMINISTRATION BUDGET 'SAVINGS'

"The current five-year plan has generated more than \$10 billion in federal revenue from lessees – note, this money is more than half the 'savings' projected by President Obama in his May 7th announcement of his Fiscal Year 2010 budget. Failure to reinstate the lease plan could force the federal government to refund the entire \$10

billions and threaten oil and gas production in the Gulf of Mexico that has already come online under this program. The government will also have to forego billions of more dollars expected from upcoming lease sales.

BACKGROUND ON COURT DECISION

On April 17, 2009, the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit issued a decision in the lawsuits filed by the Center for Biological Diversity and the Native Village of Point Hope, Alaska that challenged the validity of the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Leasing Program for 2007 – 2012.

The Court found that the government did not conduct an adequate analysis of the relative environmental sensitivities of the various OCS leasing areas. Additionally, it ruled that the Department of the Interior must conduct a more complete analysis and reassess its leasing schedule. Ultimately, the Court vacated and remanded the 2007 – 2012 offshore oil and natural gas leasing program.

In the wake of this ruling, the Administration now faces several options. It could:

- 1. Remain silent and refuse to take action to appeal - which leaves the de facto ban on the current 2007-2012 offshore drilling plan in place. This would stop all new leasing in the OCS and threaten development of all leases issued under this plan until a new plan is in place.*
- 2. Comply with the Court's ruling. Since the Department of the Interior already has more than 1600 pages of comprehensive environmental analysis on the OCS plan, it could quickly complete the specific analysis requested by the Court. This would enable the Minerals Management Service to appeal to the court to reinstate the plan and continue the regular operation of OCS leasing and development.*

###

<http://republicans.resourcescommittee.house.gov>

[Facebook](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Twitter](#)