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Hastings' Floor Statement on the Congressional Replacement of President Obama's No-New-Drilling, No-New-Jobs Offshore Plan

WASHINGTON, D.C. – House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04) delivered the following opening statement on the House floor today in support of H.R. 6082, the *Congressional Replacement of President Obama's Energy-Restricting and Job-Limiting Offshore Drilling Plan*.



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“Under the shadow of the Supreme Court’s ruling on Obamacare, the Obama Administration on June 28th quietly announced the President’s proposed final offshore drilling plan for 2012-2017.

Despite claims of being proud of their energy record, the Obama Administration deliberately chose to announce their plan on a day when it would get buried in Obamacare news coverage. This shows that even the Obama Administration is not proud of their plan that would place 85 percent of America’s offshore areas off-limits to energy production.

Under section 18 of the Outer Continental Shelf Leasing Act, when any President proposes a new five-year offshore drilling plan it must be submitted to Congress for a mandatory 60-day review before it can become final and take effect. That 60-day clock is ticking. It’s now Congress’ responsibility to take action - to reject President Obama’s no-new-drilling, no-new-jobs plan and to replace it with a robust, responsible plan to safely develop our offshore energy resources.

According to analysis conducted by the non-partisan Congressional Research Service, the President has proposed fewer lease sales in his plan than any President since the process began. President Obama rates worse than even Jimmy Carter.

President Obama's proposal doesn't open one new area for leasing and energy production. It would set our nation's energy production back to the days before 2008 when two moratoria prohibited drilling of the vast majority of America's offshore areas. Both moratoria were lifted after the summer of 2008 due to the outrage of the American people over the cost of four-dollar-per-gallon gasoline – and they demanded that the federal government take action. President Obama proposes to effectively re-impose the moratoria.

From nearly the day he took the oath of office, President Obama has put the brakes on new American energy production and job creation. In the first weeks of the Administration, the Interior Department took a nearly complete new offshore lease plan and put it on hold for six-months, and then tossed that draft plan out entirely and started over. It took them over three and half years to get a new proposed plan in place. Along the way, they delayed and canceled multiple lease sales.

For example, President Obama canceled the Virginia lease sale scheduled for 2011 and now refuses to include Virginia in his 2012-2017 plan. He is responsible for closing an entire new area to drilling and cheating the Commonwealth out of thousands of jobs. If President Obama has his way, Virginia will be left out in the cold until 2017 at the absolute soonest.

The bill being considered today, H.R. 6082, is titled the '*Congressional Replacement of President Obama's Energy-Restricting and Job-limiting Offshore Drilling Plan.*'

In stark contrast to President Obama's plan, this bill represents a drill-smart plan that includes 29 lease sales and focuses energy production in specific areas containing America's greatest known oil and natural gas resources.

The bill would replace the lease sales schedule in the President's proposed plan and safely open new areas that were previously under moratoria – such as the Mid-Atlantic, Southern Pacific and Arctic. It does this while ensuring that necessary and required environmental reviews are conducted.

The Congressional replacement plan would generate \$600 million in additional revenue and create tens of thousands of new American jobs.

Tomorrow there will be a direct up or down vote on the President's proposed plan when we consider H.R. 6168 under suspension of the rules. There will also be a direct up or down vote on this bill to replace it. Members can decide if the President's plan meets the standards expected by the American people or if we should replace it with a real plan to create jobs and grow our economy.

The House is taking action to replace the President's proposed plan and I call on the Senate to do the same. If the Senate does nothing and lets the 60-day clock run out, that is an

endorsement of the President's plan. It's an endorsement of a plan that re-imposes the drilling moratoria, creates no-new jobs and no-new energy. For the Senators of Virginia, it's an endorsement of a plan that forfeits energy production and job creation in the Commonwealth for at least another five years.

We can do better than the President's proposed plan, and our Nation deserves better. By passing this bill, we are standing up for American energy and American jobs and moving our country forward.

Thank you and I reserve the balance of my time."

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