

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 24, 2019

The Honorable David Bernhardt
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Acting Secretary Bernhardt:

I am writing to express my appreciation for the prompt briefings that the Department of the Interior (DOI) provided to both Republican and Democratic Natural Resources Committee staff concerning DOI's efforts to minimize the partial shutdown's disruption to domestic energy production.

DOI's energy development activities on federal lands and offshore are critically important to our national economy and account for approximately 24% of total U.S. crude oil production and 13% of total U.S. natural gas production.¹ Oil, natural gas, and coal operations on federal lands and waters supported 676,151 American jobs in Fiscal Year (FY) 2017.² Delays in holding scheduled lease sales or in the processing of applications to drill will inject uncertainty into the permitting process, and adversely impact federal and State treasuries. States with energy development on federal lands within their borders or off their coasts rely on the revenues generated from those activities to fund critical services, including public education.³ Any delay in the receipt of planned revenues could cause significant budgetary challenges at the State and local level.

As such, I applaud DOI's actions to utilize carryover funds⁴ from FY 2018 appropriations and certain congressionally mandated fees to ensure that key federal programs and processes remain functioning. For example, throughout the partial lapse in appropriations DOI continues

¹ MARC HUMPHRIES, CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE, R42432, U.S. CRUDE OIL AND NATURAL GAS PRODUCTION IN FEDERAL AND NONFEDERAL AREAS 3 & 5 (APR. 13, 2018), *available at* <http://www.crs.gov/reports/pdf/R42432>.

² OFFICE OF POLICY ANALYSIS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR ECONOMIC REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2017 11 (Oct. 19, 2018) *available at* https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/fy_2017_econ_report_final_11_1_18.pdf.

³ OFFICE OF NATURAL RESOURCES REVENUE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR, NATURAL RESOURCES REVENUE DATA, <https://revenue.data.doi.gov/explore/>.

⁴ OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET, EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT, CIRCULAR NO. A-11, PREPARATION, SUBMISSION, AND EXECUTION OF THE BUDGET § 120.2 (2018) *available at* <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/a11.pdf>.

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its commitment to facilitating public comment on the energy leasing and permitting processes. Additionally, pursuant to its contingency plan, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management continues to work towards the upcoming offshore lease sale in the Gulf of Mexico planned for March of 2019.⁵ Holding the lease sale on time will prevent the delay or loss of potentially millions of dollars in revenues to States, the federal government, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund.⁶ Further, the Office of Natural Resources Revenue's decision to continue payments from the Abandoned Mine Land Fund to the United Mine Workers of American Health and Retirement Funds ensures that thousands of retired mine workers receive their benefits.⁷

It is apparent that DOI has developed thoughtful action plans to prepare its bureaus and employees in the event of any potential lapse in appropriations. I commend your continued dedication during this time to minimizing the shutdown's disruption to the American people and sustaining domestic energy production activities upon which millions of Americans depend.

Sincerely,



Rob Bishop
Ranking Republican
Committee on Natural Resources

cc: The Honorable Raúl Grijalva, Chairman, House Committee on Natural Resources

⁵ BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BUREAU OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT FISCAL YEAR 2019 CONTINGENCY PLAN (Jan. 8, 2019) *available at* <https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/2019-1-boem-contingency-plan.pdf>.

⁶ Press Release, U.S. Department of the Interior, Interior Announces Results of Mexico Region-Wide Oil and Gas Lease (Aug. 15, 2018) *available at* <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/interior-announces-results-gulf-mexico-region-wide-oil-and-gas-lease-251>.

⁷ 30 U.S.C. § 1232.