

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 26, 2010

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar:

Thank you for your continued efforts to address a host of issues affecting our country's natural resources. This letter is to encourage the Department of the Interior (DOI) to move forward expeditiously with the 2007-2012 Five-Year Outer Continental Shelf Program as it relates to offshore oil and natural gas development in Alaska. Further delays of this program directly hinder efforts to: 1) sustain and promote job growth during a period of high national unemployment; 2) stabilize energy prices, while responsibly developing affordable, common sense domestic energy resources; 3) ensure additional federal offshore revenues for state and federal governments; and 4) reduce America's dependence on foreign energy supplies.

While we support necessary actions to ensure that a sufficient scientific and environmental analysis is fully conducted before scheduling oil and gas lease sales off our coasts, we are concerned by the considerable amount of time DOI has taken to complete what appears to be a clear technical analysis of the scientific and environmental issues associated with the oil and gas lease areas off Alaska's coast and publish the Secretarial decision. In particular, ten months have passed since the program was vacated, which is surprising considering several public statements from Administration officials have been made acknowledging that the new environmental analysis would be completed expeditiously and issued in 2009.

With first-time claims for unemployment benefits nearly reaching the half-million mark last month and the national economy struggling to regain its global competitive edge, it is important to bring Alaska's vast oil and natural gas reserves back online. According to a study by the University of Alaska's Institute of Social and Economic Research University, new offshore energy production in the state of Alaska would produce an annual average of 35,000 jobs and total payroll of more than \$72 billion over the next 50 years. New offshore oil and gas development in Alaska would also generate thousands of new, high-paying jobs throughout the 50 states, including steel and pipe manufacturers in the Midwest, shipping on the coasts, advanced computer technology in California and Seattle, and union labor for pipeline construction and maintenance.

It is our belief that the 2007-2012 Five-Year Program, as it relates to Alaska, needs to move forward. The dangers of inaction are too great, as considerable doubt would be raised among hardworking Americans whose livelihoods are tied to current and future lease sales. The costs of not developing additional U.S. reserves would put a huge burden on an already struggling American economy. In fact, not developing our offshore natural resources is projected to cost

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energy intensive industries nearly 13 million jobs and cumulatively decrease the nation's real disposable income by \$2.34 trillion, according to a new report issued by the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners.

As elected officials who represent consumers adversely impacted by volatile energy prices, we believe that it is essential for DOI to fully complete its work on the 2007-2012 Five-Year Program because it is an important step in creating a robust national energy policy and securing our energy and economic future.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.



JIM COSTA
Member of Congress

Sincerely,



DAN BOREN
Member of Congress