



November 9, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Collectively, the undersigned represent a (large) majority of Alaska's nearly 340,000 workers. As a diverse group of elected officials, business owners, community leaders and other Alaskan residents, we all support the exploration and production of Alaska's abundant Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) oil and natural gas resources. Development of these energy resources is vital to our State's wellbeing, offers the jobs and revenue to support a national economic recovery and is critical to national security.

To date, exploration and production of the vast resources of the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas have been obstructed by special interest groups that have misused the administrative process to stop exploration of the Arctic. Both the Bush Administration and your Administration have, after careful review to ensure all regulatory requirements are met, permitted Shell's plans to explore the Alaskan OCS multiple times. Both Administrations have affirmed that Shell has met - if not exceeded - all regulatory standards.

Shell's exploration program has not been blocked due to deficiencies in its proposed operations. Rather, Shell's program has been blocked by administrative challenges and legal actions intended to delay or invalidate permits based on alleged gaps in the administrative process, not flaws in the substance of Shell's proposed operations.

We urge your Administration to respond swiftly and proactively to resolve any further appeals or litigation that could block Shell's exploration program next summer.

Continued delays hold hostage the enormous economic growth and energy security potential of the Alaskan OCS and greatly limit the ability of the State of Alaska to provide secure, affordable sources of energy for millions of American consumers. Against the backdrop of America's struggling economy, development of the Alaskan OCS could generate 55,000 new jobs per year for 50 years, \$145 billion in new payroll, and \$193 billion in additional government revenues over the next 50 years. This combination of job creation and deficit reduction – all without any expense to taxpayers – is exactly the type of stimulus our ailing economy requires.

Furthermore, Alaskan OCS development is an issue of paramount importance to the nation's energy security. For decades, the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS) has transported oil from Northern Alaska to millions of Americans along the West Coast. Yet, as production on the North Slope declines, the pipeline's throughput has fallen to one-third capacity, jeopardizing the infrastructure's long-term viability. In effect, if significant additional sources of oil in Alaska are not produced for transport in TAPS over the next decade, the pipeline could cease operating, forcing West Coast refineries to import significantly more oil from overseas. Simply put, the nation's energy security is at risk.

It is imperative that companies like Shell be allowed to explore off Alaska's coast. Without this first step, we cannot fully understand the extent of Alaska's offshore resource base. The nation's economy has historically been influenced by a spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship that is driven by a quest for knowledge.

Exploration of the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas is a critical step in advancing a better understanding of America's Arctic and the role it can play in America's economic growth.

The Administration has committed itself to improving the regulatory system in the United States. We now encourage the Administration to adopt a more practicable and predictable permitting process for the OCS. This will not only ensure more efficient processes in Alaska, but for other parts of the United States that are seeking to expand traditional and renewable energy production as well.

Both the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas have vast potential to jumpstart our nation's economy and return the United States to a nation of doers. Economic growth and environmental protection are not mutually exclusive. We Alaskans have, time and again, proven the ability to harness our domestic resources with the highest of environmental standards for the land that we so deeply cherish.

We implore your administration to assure that the 2012 exploration plan proceeds as scheduled.

Sincerely,



Jason Brune,
Chairman, Consumer Energy Alliance – Alaska

Governor Sean Parnell
State of Alaska

Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)
United States Senate

Senator Mark Begich (D-AK)
United States Senate

Congressman Don Young (R-AK)
United States House of Representatives

Members of the Alaska State Legislature

Senator Cathy Giessel (District P)
Senator Lesil McGuire (District N)
Senator Kevin Meyer (District O)

Speaker of the House Mike Chenault (District 34)
Representative Mia Costello (District 27)
Representative Anna Fairclough (District 17)
Representative Eric Feige (District 12)
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Representative Craig Johnson (District 28)
Representative Bob Lynn (District 31)
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**All signatories agreed to have his or her name and organization identified in this letter with the understanding that each signatory is expressing his or her personal support on the issue. While signatories are a collection of employers, company and organization executives, personal support does not necessarily mean that every employee or member has specifically endorsed the letter.*

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Administrator Jane Lubchenco, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration;
Administrator Cass Sunstein, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs;
Acting Secretary Rebecca Blank, Department of Commerce;
Secretary Steven Chu, Department of Energy;
Secretary Tim Geithner, Department of Treasury;
Secretary Leon E. Panetta, Department of Defense;
Secretary Hilda L. Solis, Department of Labor