

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 18, 2009

The Honorable Ken Salazar  
Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We are writing to convey our strong support for the Draft Proposed Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Leasing Program (DPP) proposed by the U.S. Minerals Management Service (MMS). By opening up new offshore areas for natural gas and oil leasing and development and also allowing for the development of renewable energy as proposed in the DPP, the Department of the Interior can provide the United States with an opportunity to responsibly produce our own energy. This development will bolster our nation's economy, create new jobs and decrease our dependence on foreign sources of energy.

It is more important than ever that the federal government allow for development of domestic offshore energy supplies made available in the DPP. By offering new leasing opportunities, the DPP is appropriately expansive and provides the Department with maximum flexibility to properly utilize our nation's domestic resources.

Now is the appropriate time to promote long-term policies that responsibly encourage job creation while growing the economy. Important offshore areas, like those in Alaska, offer tremendous natural gas and oil resources. By some estimates, the Chukchi Sea alone off Alaska's coast contains as much natural gas and oil as the country has produced in the Gulf of Mexico since 1942.

Additionally, we urge MMS to move forward with the 2007-2012 Leasing Program while working to approve and finalize the new DPP. Implementing a sensible, forward-thinking energy policy will allow for responsible leasing and development of America's energy resources and will help industries and businesses here at home that rely heavily on natural gas and crude oil. It will also further our national security and energy security interests and, of course, spur jobs and economic growth as we open new areas to leasing and development.

In conclusion, we are pleased to see that the MMS has included new leasing areas in the DPP and has acknowledged the need for the United States to begin responsibly developing the abundant energy resources located off our coasts. We believe that the DPP is an important step in creating a robust, diverse, national energy policy which will help secure our energy future. We urge you to move forward on the DPP as you work to finalize a new five-year OCS plan. Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of assistance to you.

Sincerely,



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