



"Gasoline prices are climbing ever higher; the question is what the administration is doing to address it. For the past two years, their only answer has been more regulations, more red tape and more uncertainty."



[Regulations stifle drilling, push gas prices up at pump](#)

February 15, 2011

The Hill

Rep. Doc Hastings, Chairman House Natural Resources Committee

Americans across the country are facing rising gasoline prices that are squeezing families' monthly budgets and businesses' ability to prosper and create jobs. There's a growing anxiety that, like the summer of 2008, prices will once again surpass \$4 a gallon.

Instead of addressing this issue head on, the Obama administration has actively opposed efforts to expand American energy production. They've imposed burdensome regulations and policies that are slowing economic recovery and casting shadows of uncertainty on job creators. These regulations are locking up American energy resources, costing U.S. jobs, increasing our dependence on foreign energy and leading to higher prices at the pump.

It would be in our best interest to heed Daniel Webster's words that are prominently inscribed on the walls of the House Chamber, "Let us develop the resources of our land ... and see whether we also, in our day and generation, may not perform something worthy to be remembered."

Instead, this administration is taking America down the exact opposite path.

There's been an anti-energy regulatory agenda in place since nearly the first day of the Obama administration. One of the first decisions made by Interior Secretary Ken Salazar was to immediately withdraw 77 promising oil and natural-gas leases in Utah that are vital to job creation and worth millions in revenue to the federal government.

The Interior Department took further steps to block recreational and job-creating access to public lands by imposing a new "wild lands" policy. This effectively allows the administration to circumvent the strictly congressional authority of designating wilderness areas. By treating these new "wild lands" as de facto wilderness, millions of acres of public land could be placed off-limits from their original multi-use purpose.

The regulatory cobweb of red tape and constantly moving goalposts created by the Obama administration after the Gulf of Mexico oil spill have resulted in a de facto moratorium on deepwater and shallow-water drilling permits.

Since last April, only a handful of shallow-water permits and no deepwater permits have been issued. The moratorium has cost tens of thousands of jobs and resulted in 200,000 barrels of lost oil production per day — which America is now forced to replace from unstable and unfriendly foreign sources. Coupled with the revised five-year Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) drilling plan that takes the vast majority of the OCS off the table for future exploration, these policies fail to address rising gasoline prices and will force America to deepen its dependence on foreign energy.

The Obama administration's burdensome regulations are also threatening thousands of coal jobs. The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement has initiated significant rewrites to current mining regulations. According to the administration's own conservative estimates, their proposed rewrite will cost at least 7,000 jobs and decrease or flat-line production in 22 states.

The administration is also considering new regulations on natural-gas production. Last December, Secretary Salazar suggested that the Interior Department should regulate hydraulic fracturing, a shale natural-gas retrieval technology, on public lands. Interior Department regulation would duplicate current regulatory efforts by states, halt natural gas exploration and cripple local economies dependent on the industry.

Not even the immensity of our oceans can escape this administration's desire for new rules to impose federal government control. Through an executive order, President Obama implemented a new National Ocean Council as well as Marine Spatial Planning recommendations that could significantly impact the economic and recreational uses of our oceans, coastal lands and lands along rivers. Restrictive national standards, along with ocean zoning, could place huge portions of our oceans off-limits to communities who rely on our oceans for commerce and recreation.

Gasoline prices are climbing ever higher; the question is what the administration is doing to address it. For the past two years, their only answer has been more regulations, more red tape and more uncertainty. American businesses need sensible rules and standards that will both protect our environment and allow job-creating projects to move forward safely, responsibly and in a timely manner.

In recognition of Daniel Webster's astute words, a comprehensive all-of-the-above national energy policy that embraces all types of energy production, keeps energy prices low and frees America of our dependence on foreign sources would truly be something worthy of being remembered.

###

House Natural Resources Committee Press Office
Contact: [Jill Strait](#) or [Spencer Pederson](#)
202-226-9019

<http://naturalresources.house.gov>
[Facebook](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Twitter](#)