



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, July 25, 2012
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Hastings: President's Offshore Drilling Plan is a Giant Step Backwards for American Energy Production and Job Creation

WASHINGTON, D.C. – House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04) delivered the following opening statement on the House floor today on H.R. 6018, *President Obama's Job-Limiting, Energy-Restricting Offshore Plan*.



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“The bill we are now considering, HR 6168, is a very simple bill. It would implement President Obama’s proposed offshore drilling lease plan for 2012-2017.

Late yesterday, the House debated H.R. 6082, the Congressional Replacement of President Obama’s Energy-Restricting and Job-Limiting Offshore Drilling Plan.

These bills contain two distinctly different offshore drilling plans – and the House will have the opportunity to choose as to which one allows for more American energy production and more American job creation, and which one continues to lock-up America’s resources.

This is occurring during the 60-day mandatory review period provided for under Section 18 of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, which requires a President to submit his proposed plan to Congress for review before it can take effect. This 60-day clock began ticking on June 28th when President Obama’s plan was submitted to the House and Senate.

I am officially the sponsor of this bill to implement President Obama’s plan. I introduced

the bill with the specific purpose of allowing the people's House to officially go on record as either endorsing the President's plan or registering its opposition to it. While I am the bill's sponsor, I oppose the President's plan. It is a giant step backwards for American energy production and job creation.

President Obama likes to give speeches claiming support for offshore drilling, however his actions while in office are 180 degrees opposite of his rhetoric.

When President Obama was sworn into office in January 2009, nearly all of our offshore areas were newly open to American energy production. This was the result of public outrage in the summer of 2008 over \$4 gasoline prices that resulted in the federal government lifting two moratoria that blocked energy production off of both the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts. The will of the American people was clear: for the sake of family budgets, small businesses, and our economy, we must produce more energy in America to lessen our dependence on hostile foreign sources.

When President Obama took office, there was an offshore plan underway to conduct lease sales in new areas that were no longer under moratoria. Instead of seizing this opportunity to vastly increase American energy production, President Obama tossed that plan aside and delayed and canceled lease sales – including a sale scheduled for 2011 that would open a section of offshore Virginia.

The Obama Administration has spent the past three and half years slowly writing a plan that takes our country backwards. A plan that effectively re-imposes the drilling moratoria lifted in 2008.

The President's proposed plan keeps 85 percent of our offshore areas off-limits to energy production. The Atlantic Coast, the Pacific Coast and parts of the Arctic are all kept under lock and key. His proposed plan opens absolutely no new areas for drilling.

As an example, after delaying the Virginia lease sale in 2011, President Obama doesn't even include it in his proposed plan. Under President Obama, the absolute earliest a Virginia lease sale could happen is 2017 – six years after it was scheduled to take place.

In total, the President's proposed plan only includes 15 lease sales. According to the non-partisan Congressional Research Service this means President Obama has the distinction of offering the lowest number of lease sales ever in a five-year plan since the program began. That's worse than Jimmy Carter.

During the several hours of debate yesterday, there was very little defense of the President's limited and weak offshore plan. In fact, a great deal of time was expended by the other side trying to change the subject rather than endorse or defend the President's offshore plan. I think that shows just how out-of-touch and unacceptable the President's plan is.

Today we will likely hear the deliberately misleading claim that the President's proposed plan opens 75 percent of the known offshore resources. This is simply not true and is meant to provide political cover for a failed record on offshore drilling. The cold hard facts

are the President is effectively reimposing a moratorium on 85 percent of our nation's offshore areas.

An attempt might also be made to claim that this bill doesn't represent the President's plan. It couldn't be more black and white. This bill exactly replicates the offshore lease sale schedule in the President's proposed plan – both by location and sale year. HR 6168 is President Obama's plan.

Just last week, Interior Secretary Salazar wrote that President Obama's offshore plan is what the 'American people have asked for.' In reality, the American people want increased American energy production and new American jobs. The President's proposed plan fails to deliver on both. By voting against this bill, Members of Congress can stand up for the American people and reject the President's no-new-drilling, no-new-jobs plan. We can and must do better.”

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