

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 26, 2009

Nancy Sutley
Chair
Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force
722 Jackson Place
Washington, D.C. 20503-0002

Dear Chairwoman Sutley:

As supporters of responsible and productive use of our ocean resources, we write to express concerns about the Interim Report of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force that was recently released by the Obama Administration.

The Ocean Policy Task Force is proposing a system of oceans governance that could significantly impact economic and recreational activities in our oceans. The policies and principles that are advocated in the Interim Report focus heavily on environmental stewardship, which is one of several important priorities. However, the Interim Report does not adequately support other national priorities, including the economic development of ocean resources and the recreational use of our waters.

We are particularly concerned about the Task Force's impact on our nation's ability to safely develop its own offshore energy, including oil, natural gas and renewable energy. It is critical that the Task Force's proposals do not inhibit energy activity offshore in domestic waters and undermine the Department of the Interior's Five Year Leasing Program for offshore energy development. An ocean management policy that puts new restrictions on energy development would not only raise prices for consumers, but would negatively impact Americans working in the offshore energy industry and all Americans whose livelihood depends on access to affordable energy.

According to a recent American Energy Alliance report, expanded drilling in the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) would generate 1.2 million jobs and \$70 billion in additional wages annually, plus \$8 trillion in economic output and \$2.2 trillion in total tax receipts. The American public has also expressed its overwhelming support for increasing offshore energy production.

Economic and recreational activity in our oceans is compatible with responsible ocean stewardship. The oil and natural gas industry has proven that environmental protection of the ocean can be accomplished in harmony with energy development. Advances in technology have made offshore production cleaner and safer than ever. OCS leases produce about 1.4 million barrels of oil per day, and the Mineral Management Service calculates that since the 1980s less than 0.001% of the oil produced in the OCS has been spilled.

We urge the Obama Administration and the Task Force to take an approach to oceans policy that recognizes and promotes access to the abundant American energy resources located offshore. By ensuring that offshore areas surrounding the Gulf, Atlantic, Pacific and Alaskan coasts are open to responsible oil, natural gas and alternative energy development, the federal government will provide the nation with the opportunity to safely produce our own energy. This effort will significantly benefit our economy by creating domestic jobs and decreasing our dependence on foreign energy.

Sincerely,

Bill Cassidy

W. L. G.

Colli C. Peterson

Joe Barton

Steve Buyer

To Bonner

Jim Witt

Hyatt

Doug Lamborn

Carlson

Rep. Bob Latta

McCluskey

Charlie J. Melancon

John Shadegg

Jack Smith

Tommy

Steve Seabie

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Alan Page → Michel T. Allard

Paul Brown

Tom Haber

Rocky Alexander

Olum Thompson

Gregg Harper

Phil Pingry

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Nichole Bachmann

Henry Cullen

Jean Schmidt

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John Roogna

Chris Sanders

Ken Calvert

Pete Sessions

Gene Taylor

Sen Cole

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Elton Gallegly

Steve Cunn

Mike Coffman

Robert J. Witt

Lynne A. ~~Witt~~

Steve King

Bobby Bright

Steve Chaffetz

Devin Nunes

Cathy McMoran-Rodgers

Gregory M. Pence

John Fleming

Charles W. Dent