

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 11, 2010

The Honorable Robert V. Abbey  
Acting Director, Minerals Management Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Abbey:

We understand that members of the Shallow Water Energy Security Coalition will be meeting with you and your staff on Friday, June 11<sup>th</sup>, to discuss the need to clarify the Notice to Lessees focusing on new safety measures (Safety NTL) issued by the Department of the Interior (DOI) on June 8, 2010. We appreciate the opportunity you are providing to meet with the Coalition members, and we strongly urge that you work closely with shallow water drilling interests in the Gulf of Mexico to ensure that shallow water drilling operations may recommence immediately.

As you know, the Administration has stated that the moratorium on shallow water drilling in the Gulf of Mexico has been lifted. However, the subsequent issuance of the Safety NTL has caused great concern and uncertainty, and without further clarification by DOI, acts as a *de facto* continuing moratorium on future shallow water drilling operations. The Safety NTL imposes a number of additional inspections and certifications for operations on the OCS, but there are many questions as to how these measures will be implemented and applied by DOI/MMS, and once the new requirements are met, how quickly the MMS will resume issuance of new drilling permits. Furthermore, additional uncertainty exists in that DOI also has stated that it would issue "in the coming days" expanded requirements for exploration plans and development plans on the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf.

We attach for your review a list of Safety NTL clarifications required by the shallow water drilling industry in order to provide the certainty required to recommence drilling operations. Your agency must immediately resolve these and other uncertainties and immediately begin the appropriate issuance of new shallow water drilling permits.

Please keep us apprised of your efforts in this matter. This issue is of vital importance to the people of Louisiana.

Sincerely,



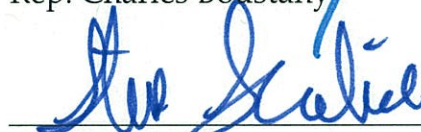
Rep. Rodney Alexander



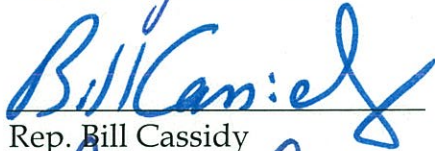
Rep. Charles Boustany



Rep. Charlie Melancon



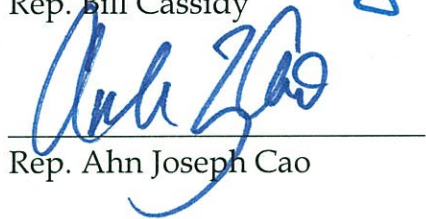
Rep. Steve Salise



Rep. Bill Cassidy



Rep. John Fleming



Rep. Ahn Joseph Cao