

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 19, 2010

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary
Department of Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar:

We are writing to express our serious concern over reports that Minerals Management Service (MMS) Director Liz Birnbaum deliberately withheld information from you regarding public comments received on the five-year plan for new offshore oil and gas drilling on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS).

According to emails uncovered under the Freedom of Information Act, Director Birnbaum directly contacted a number of Department of Interior (DOI) employees explaining her rationale to withhold important information on the proposed OCS Oil & Gas Leasing Program for 2010 to 2015. As you are now no doubt aware, the DOI received approximately 530,000 comments, and according to Ms. Birnbaum's email, with the overwhelming majority in support of off-shore drilling.

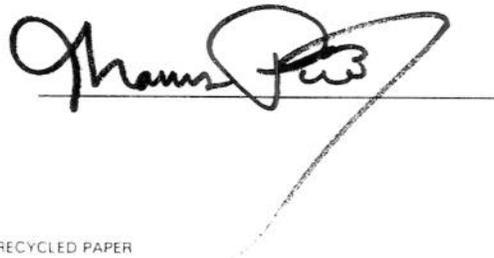
We find it outrageous that members of your staff would purposely delay the release of public input from hundreds of thousands of concerned Americans. The issue of responsible offshore energy production should not be politicized and delayed through bureaucratic fiat simply because your employees do not like the result of the comments.

Along with President Obama, you have regularly expressed the need for a comprehensive energy plan that includes the responsible production of fossil fuels on the Outer Continental Shelf. The mounting evidence is clear; the policies and practices displayed by your employees, along with your recent decision to delay the release of a new leasing plan by three years until 2012, are not matching the rhetoric of this Administration and running contrary to the will of the American people.

You stated in April of last year that you desired to maximize public opportunity to "give us guidance on what it is that they want to do" because "these are not decisions that are going to be made behind closed doors." The actions of your staff, combined with your abrupt decision to ensure virtually no new lease sales will occur during President Obama's term in office, run in obvious conflict to your previous statements.

We respectfully request an explanation of why you continue to employ individuals who seemingly seek to suppress public opinion, along with a detailed explanation of why you have changed your position to proceed with an OCS Leasing Program, since it is well-supported by the American people. We appreciate your consideration of this matter and look forward to a timely reply.

Sincerely,



Phil Pringey

Art Filer

Ron Paul

Clarke Baderum

Kevin Brady

Marky (K)

Joseph Pitts

Doug Lomborn

Aaron Shook

Pete Orr

Patrick Huber

Tom Burnett

Alan King

Virginia Fox

Bob Bob

Lynn Jenkins

Joe Wilson

Kenny Mancini

Rodney Alexander

Paul C Brown

John Shady

J M W

Ron Schmitt

Wally Hergen

Dr Hensarling

Frank Chittenden

John ... GA-3
Cady ...

Randy Ann

Robert B. Aderholt

K. J. ...

Andy J. ...
Jo Bonner

Carl Kingston

[Signature] 24-19

Jack W. ...

Mary F. ...

M. ...

Steve ...

[Signature]

Ken ...

John ...

Gene ...

Tom ...

Kent ...

Bob ...

Donald ...

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

2010 MAR 30 PM 2:47

RECEIVED

484475

Richardson, Carrie

From: Barter, Madeline [Madeline.Barter@mail.house.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, April 06, 2010 5:24 PM
To: Richardson, Carrie
Subject: letter signatures

Below are the names. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Gingrey
~~Gingrey~~, Bishop (UT), Hensarling, Jenkins, Paul, Wilson (SC), Blackburn, McHenry, Marchant, Flake, Herger, Brady, Alexander, Rogers, Broun, Pitts, Price (GA), Shadegg, Lamborn, Barrett (SC), McClintock, Schock, Gohmert, ~~Olsen~~, ~~Olsen~~, Chaffetz, King (IA), Westmoreland, Foxx, McMorris Rodgers, Neugebauer, Pence, Aderholt, Wamp, Conaway, Latta, Cao, Calvert, Souder, Hoekstra, Bonner, Bachus, Burton, Issa, Kingston, Franks, Shimkus, Fallin, and Goodlatte

Thanks,

Madeline M. Barter
Legislative Assistant
Congressman Parker Griffith (AL-05)
417 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-4801 (o)
(202) 225-4392 (f)

Pence

Total Number Of Records: 1

| FOIA Number | Request Date | Completion Date | Requester Last Name | Requester First Name | Subject |
|---------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---|
| OS-2004-00171 | January 21, 2004 | January 30, 2004 | Groppe | Maureen | "Correspondence during 2003 between your department and members of the Indiana congressional delegation. (The delegation is Sen. Richard Lugar, Sen. Evan Bayh, Rep. Pete Visclosky, Rep. Chris Chocola, Rep. Mark Souder, Rep. Steve Buyer, Rep. Dan Burton, Rep. Mike Pence, Rep. Julia Carson, Rep. John Hostettler and Rep. Baron Hill.)" |