U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

August 16, 2017

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke:

The United States is in a unique and strong position today because of the abundant oil and natural gas safely produced across the country and off our coasts. Once heavily dependent on foreign sources of energy, our status as an energy superpower not only provides our nation with greater energy security, but also enhances our national security efforts at home and abroad. We applaud your commitment to making the U.S. “energy dominant” and look forward to the development of a new National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program. In the development of this program, it is imperative that we fully consider all OCS lands, including those not part of the current 2017-2022 Program, to ensure opportunities are not missed.

The onshore energy renaissance has made the U.S. the number one producer of oil and natural gas in the world. Our adversaries and rivals across the globe are paying attention. We have the opportunity to further secure our global position by encouraging exploration and leasing in new OCS areas and encouraging investment in traditional offshore development areas. Production from the OCS requires vast capital expenditures on long-term projects with long lead times. Just as today’s energy security is the result of production set in motion by decisions made years ago, the decisions on OCS leasing and development facing the Department today will lay the groundwork for our energy and national security for decades. Therefore, it is critical that leasing in the Gulf of Mexico continues and that we look for new energy resources in areas not included in the 2017-2022 Five Year OCS Leasing Program. There is demonstrated interest in the leasing and development of previously excluded areas, and we must consider these areas for development to optimize our nation’s resource potential.

The safe and environmentally responsible development of our offshore resources not only enhances our status as an international energy superpower, but benefits the nation through increased job creation, additional government revenue, and affordable and reliable energy supplies for consumers and manufacturing. The time is now to make the U.S. energy dominant. Expanding access to the available resource potential of the OCS during the development of a new National Leasing Program can solidify our energy superpower position into the future. We look forward to working with the Department on an offshore energy policy that puts America first, creates new jobs and government revenue, and enhances our economy as a whole.

Sincerely,

Rob Bishop
Chairman

http://naturalresources.house.gov
Will Hurd
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