

Knowing of your interest in energy policy, I wanted to inform that you that the Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar, recently released his strategy for energy production on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). While Secretary Salazar's plan seeks additional information for furthering renewable offshore energy development, it unfortunately delays implementation of the Department's five-year plan for oil and gas development on the OCS. This decision was made despite the strong support from myself and 69 other House members for [opening up](#) the OCS for production as the Administration reviews the five-year plan.

The Department of the Interior originally published its plan on January 21, 2009, with a 60-day comment period. The plan released yesterday will extend that comment period until September 23rd. I am concerned with this extension, especially considering that it comes on the heels of a [decision last week](#) to remove nearly two-thirds of a proposed oil and gas lease sale on federal lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management in Utah.

Although gasoline prices have come down considerably since the painfully high prices of last year, it is important to note that the summer driving season is just around the corner and the prospect of future price spikes is very real. Because of this, it is essential that the United States pursue the estimated 86 billion barrels of recoverable oil contained in the OCS, which is more than 17 times the total amount of oil the US imported last year. Despite the removal of the offshore drilling moratoria last year, 97% of the OCS is not leased. Production of these resources cannot occur until leasing occurs. I strongly believe that President Obama's Administration should do everything it can to expedite the leasing process, increase American-made energy, and reduce our dependence on foreign oil.