

Knowing of your interest in energy policy, I wanted to inform that you that the new Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar, recently directed the Bureau of Land Management to reject bids on 77 oil and gas leases located on the agency's lands in the State of Utah. These leases were among 116 auctioned off on December 18th of last year. While the remaining 39 bids will continue through the leasing process, I find it troubling that nearly two-thirds of the proposed lease areas were taken off the table.

Despite the current reprieve from last year's skyrocketing oil prices, we remain at risk to future price spikes caused by exploding global demand and supply disruptions so long as we continue to import a large majority of our energy. I strongly believe that we should be taking every opportunity to develop the vast oil and gas reserves located right here in America. It has been estimated that our federal onshore and offshore reserves contain enough oil and gas to meet our current consumption levels for 130 years. Importantly, the ingenuity of American industry and 21st century technology allow for these resources to be developed in an environmentally-safe manner.

Given that a large proportion of our energy needs are met with fossil fuels, production of our domestic energy resources - in addition to pursuing alternative and renewable energy sources - will be a necessary component in achieving our goal of energy independence. For this reason, I will continue to encourage an "all of the above" energy policy. I hope that the new Administration will do the same by not further constraining potential energy development on our public lands.