

News Release



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Bipartisan Outcry Over Misguided DOI Changes

Leaders stand with 260,000 employees of western natural gas and oil industry against DOI's rhetoric, in support of American energy development

(Denver)- The Independent Petroleum Association of Mountain States (IPAMS) today thanked several Western leaders for supporting American energy development and opposing the drastic and misguided changes announced by Interior Secretary Ken Salazar last week, and called on other western governors and members of Congress to follow suit. Political leaders from both parties have released statements criticizing Secretary Salazar's announcement and standing in support of the jobs and economic activity generated by the responsible development of natural gas and oil on federal lands.

These leaders recognize the balance already attained by an industry that develops **27% of the nation's natural gas from 0.07% of federal lands**, and are concerned that the harsh rhetoric coming from DOI is aimed at the 260,000 hard working men and women dedicated to the responsible development of energy on Western public lands.

"On behalf of the 260,000 hardworking men and women whose livelihoods are supported by natural gas and oil development on Western public lands, IPAMS offers a sincere thanks to these leaders for standing up against the repeated attacks from DOI and in support of policies that allow responsible development of American energy," said Kathleen Sgamma, IPAMS Director of Government Affairs. "We hope to see other Western governors and members of Congress do the same."

In a letter to Secretary Salazar, Democratic Governor of Wyoming Dave Freudenthal took issue with Salazar's rhetoric and pointed out the inadequacies of the proposed changes. "Some would say that the oil and gas industry is getting what it deserves. But this is much too serious an issue for such pettiness. This involves families and jobs, schools and care for those on Medicaid – all at a time when our national and local economy is faltering. It involves environmental interests that demand renewable energy, but neglects the reality that natural gas will provide the backup power that will allow renewables to be viable. And while I think that the proposed policy has missed the mark, I am more than willing to put my shoulder to the wheel to help recraft it into a more functional and rational program."

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"Unfortunately, the proposed changes potentially hand significant control over oil and gas exploration, development and production to the whims of those that profess a 'nowhere, not ever' philosophy to surface disturbance of any kind," the Governor explained further. "With specific regard to the proposed changes, it seems as though the Department contemplates adding up to three additional layers of analysis into the

existing leasing process. To my point, these reviews will be made irrespective of (actually completely devoid of in most instances) substantive seismic, exploration, or other subsurface data. Functionally, it seems that we are putting on two additional belts and two additional pairs of suspenders without even knowing if we are going to wear pants."

Congressman Dan Boren (D-OK) also challenged Salazar's over-the-top rhetoric, blasting his 'kings of the world' comment when announcing his opposition to the recently announced 'job-killing' rule changes. "This kind of comment is beyond the pale when thousands of Oklahomans and people from other energy-producing states are losing their jobs due to the recession. It's the type of rhetoric that only serves to add insult to injury - like he's just trying to pile-on their misery. The energy industry is overwhelmingly made-up of independent producers that drill 90 percent of the wells in the U.S. They are the mom-and-pop outfits that run a handful of wells, the young entrepreneur seeking to expand his operation, or the regional company that employs hundreds or even thousands of people in communities across the nation. And quite frankly, they consider this brand of rancor as a slap in the face and a direct attack on their pride in having helped build this country's economy and powering its future. When did this Administration completely divorce itself of the direct correlation between the 'industry' itself and the millions of American jobs that it provides?"

Senator Bob Bennett (R-UT) stated "This announcement is yet another indication that the administration has no intention to honor its promise to produce a balanced energy plan that includes domestic energy production. The Department of the Interior continues to look for ways to make domestic energy more expensive to produce by stalling the process for several years. It is disappointing that even the circumstances of the economic downturn have provided no relief to the relentless disruptions in the production of critical American energy resources."

Senator Bennett also pointed out the illegality of the intended policy change on categorical exclusions. "I am especially disappointed that those who participated in the development of the carefully crafted provisions of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 are now using their authority to attempt to dismantle what had been a true bipartisan achievement in Congress."

Ranking Member of the House Natural Resource Committee Doc Hastings (R-WA) pointed out that "This Administration is repeatedly using its power to put American-made energy out of work when our nation should be actively pursuing the creation of all the jobs we can, including new wind and solar jobs, nuclear jobs, mining jobs, and oil and gas jobs."

[Link to letter from Governor Dave Freudenthal \(D-WY\)](#)

[Link to letter from Congressman Dan Boren \(D-OK\)](#)

[Link to statement from Senator Bob Bennet \(R-UT\)](#)

[Link to statement from Congressman Doc Hastings \(R-WA\)](#)

[Link to IPAMS position paper: "Interior's Mismanagement of the Federal Onshore Natural Gas and Oil Program"](#)

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The Independent Petroleum Association of Mountain States (IPAMS), founded in 1974, is a non-profit trade association representing more than 400 independent natural gas and oil producers, service and supply companies, banking and financial institutions and industry consultants committed to environmentally responsible energy development in the Intermountain West. More information on IPAMS and its members is available at www.ipams.org