

News Release



IPAMS
410 17th Street, Ste. 700
Denver, CO 80202

Date: May 17, 2010
Contact: Jon Haubert
(303) 623-0987
jhaubert@ipams.org

DOI Onshore Policies To Further Slow Western Energy Development

New policies mean more uncertainty, less domestic energy and lost jobs

(Denver)- The Independent Petroleum Association of Mountain States (IPAMS) expressed concern that the Department of the Interior's (DOI) changes to the onshore natural gas and oil program implemented in guidance today will continue to delay the development of clean, domestic natural gas on Western federal lands. These policy changes will further increase uncertainty by requiring redundant environmental analysis and introducing even more opportunities for legal challenge by groups intent on halting development of domestic energy on federal lands.

"We share DOI's goal of safe, environmentally responsible development of energy on non-park, non-wilderness federal lands in the West. We are proud of the balance we have achieved by producing 27% of our nation's natural gas while disturbing 0.07% of public lands. However, the policy guidance issued today increases uncertainty for producers and investors in the West by creating additional layers of red tape, hampering the development of American onshore energy," said IPAMS Director of Government Affairs Kathleen Sgamma.

"These policy changes were formalized with no input from the hundreds of thousands of hard-working men and women whose livelihoods are tied to energy development on western federal lands. These working families and their small towns and communities are already suffering from DOI's slowdown of energy development. The uncertainty that will result from these policy changes will further unemployment and decrease revenue that small towns and rural counties throughout the West depend on to fund education and public safety," said Sgamma.

According to an IPAMS' member survey, new policies from Obama's Interior Department have already prevented \$3.9 billion of investment in the West, diverting it to other countries and regions with less burdensome regulatory environments.

"These policies create an endless cycle of analysis that will serve only to slow energy development without commensurate benefit to the environment. Federal land managers will be perpetually second guessing their land use decisions, taking staff time away from on-the-ground protection and back to paperwork."

(more)

IPAMS recognizes the strong leaders from the West who care about working families and who see first-hand the impact misguided federal policies have on jobs and America's energy outlook. Senators Robert Bennett (R-UT) and John Barrasso (R-WY) are planning to introduce legislation blocking the DOI from implementing policies such as those described today. The Senators identify the threats to investment and economic growth in the West inherent in these policies and have urged the department to engage all segments of the public and consider real economic impacts before formalizing its new policies.

Local elected officials are also concerned about the effect that DOI's slowdown of economic activity on public lands is having on their rural towns and counties. 90 county commissioners and small town mayors whose constituents have been adversely affected by DOI's policies have penned letters to Secretary Salazar imploring him to consider the negative effect his policies are having on economic recovery and jobs in their communities.

[Click here to read Sens. Bennett and Barrasso's letter to Secretary Salazar.](#)

[Click here to read a letter from 90 county commissioners and small town mayors to Secretary Salazar.](#)

Key facts:

These DOI policy changes will:

- virtually eliminate exploratory leasing on western public lands
 - require speculative environmental analysis at the leasing stage, before it is even known whether there is recoverable natural gas or oil on a lease, and how many wells and other infrastructure would be necessary to develop any resource
 - take all geological and technical expertise out of the process, and centralize decision making on where and how to develop energy in the hands of Washington bureaucrats
 - take BLM staff away from on-the-ground protection to never-ending, redundant analysis
 - require three additional layers of environmental analysis,
 - Create perpetual Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) revisions while preventing productive land use decisions to be made based on those RMPs.
- As the U.S. Supreme Court has explained, "[a]n agency need not supplement an EIS every time new information comes to light after the EIS is finalized. To require otherwise would render agency decision-making intractable, always awaiting updated information only to find the new information outdated by the time a decision is made."

###

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