

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0905

July 31, 2008

The Honorable Dirk Kempthorne  
Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington DC 20240

Dear Secretary Kempthorne:

You have taken the highly unusual step of spending taxpayer dollars to prepare a new five-year oil leasing plan, when you are only a little more than one year into the current five-year plan.

Further, existing federal law established a ban on such preleasing activities. Public Law 109-432 prohibits any leasing, preleasing or other activity east of the Military Mission Line in the Gulf of Mexico ( the north-south line at 86°41' W. longitude ) until June 30, 2022.

Therefore, I intend to take whatever action is necessary to prevent you from taking this questionable step.

It is becoming increasingly clear that President Bush is set on putting oil rigs off the state of Florida before he leaves office in January, regardless of the fact it will have no effect on energy prices. The president's call for lifting the quarter-century ban on offshore oil drilling has been called "cruelly misleading" - and, rightly so.

You and he both know exploiting our coastlines won't bring down gasoline prices. In fact, a recent report from inside the administration's energy office found it will have no impact on prices.

The answer lies in the rapid development of alternative fuels and vehicles, like cars that run on hydrogen, not petroleum. And the oil companies need to drill in the 68 million acres already under lease where there still is no drilling.

There is little sense in continuing the failed energy policies of the past.

I look forward to discussing this matter with you in greater detail.

Sincerely,

