

U.S. House of Representatives

Committee on Natural Resources

Washington, DC 20515

December 1, 2010

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The comments made yesterday by yourself and Presidential Advisor Carol Browner at the Departmental forum on hydraulic fracturing are deeply concerning. The distinct implication is that the Administration has already decided to move forward with a plan to increase permitting requirements on federal land with a policy that would threaten thousands of jobs, deepen the federal deficit through reduced revenues, and harm natural gas development and our nation's energy security.

Before this dramatic proposed policy change advances further, it is requested that you respectfully allow Congress an opportunity to fully examine the issue, the impact to jobs and communities, and to consult relevant experts, including federal agencies, state regulators, federal land leaseholders, operators and contractors.

Additionally, it is requested that before taking action to unilaterally implement this policy as Secretary, that you appear before the House Natural Resources Committee in the 112th Congress to provide testimony and answer questions from Committee members. It is important for the Department to carefully consult and consider guidance from the House Natural Resources Committee on policies that will impact technological innovation and competitiveness on federal lands. The concept of transparency for fracturing is already in place at the state level and through numerous federal statutes, including OSHA requirements dealing with Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for first responders, as just one example.

The Department's consideration of requiring duplicative and burdensome disclosures – above and beyond the significant efforts already taken at the state level – raises the very real possibility of a further crippling of federal land communities and the jobs of tens of thousands of Americans that are dependent on the responsible development of those lands.

Following the November election, President Obama personally identified natural gas development as an area where he believes bipartisan cooperation is possible, and it is in this spirit that I ask you to consider these requests.

Sincerely,



Doc Hastings
Ranking Republican Member