

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 19, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write again to express our deep frustration with the permitting process to drill in the Outer Continental Shelf of the Gulf of Mexico. While we appreciate BOEMRE Director Michael Bromwich's attempt to explain his agency's position on this issue in his April 19th letter, we remain unconvinced that your administration comprehends the economic harm of its permitting policy.

We agree with the report you commissioned last year, in which the National Academy of Engineering concluded that the causes of the tragedy aboard the Deepwater Horizon, along with the subsequent 87-day long oil spill, were both "identifiable and correctable." They also concluded that a moratorium on drilling was unnecessary and would significantly exacerbate the economic impact of the spill. Unfortunately, they were correct, and the resulting slowdown of the energy industry in the Gulf has had a negative economic ripple effect across the nation.

America's energy producers are ready and willing to start expanding our access to oil and gas, but their efforts are stifled by the dysfunctional permitting process. In his letter to us, Mr. Bromwich stated that "a vital oil and gas industry is essential to our Nation's security and economy." We could not agree more. Unfortunately, his actions as the head of BOEMRE suggest he is not interested in issuing the permits that are vital to the sustainability and growth of that industry.

The permitting delay is a problem that demands your personal attention and intervention. If you look at the permit numbers for just the shallow water industry, you will see that BOEMRE only issued 16 permits in the first quarter of 2011. This is a 60 percent reduction from permits issued in the first quarter of 2009 and a fifty percent reduction from 2010 – and keep in mind, these are only the numbers for shallow water permits, not deepwater. Clearly, something is askew with the efficiency of BOEMRE's permitting approval process.

Accordingly, we reiterate our request, which was not addressed in Mr. Bromwich's response, for a meeting with your Chief of Staff, William Daley. As someone with extensive experience and accomplishment in the private sector, as well as in public service, we believe that Mr. Daley is the ideal member of your administration to whom we can explain in person the flaws that remain in the permitting process, and how rectifying those problems will help our economy remain on the path to recovery.

We understand that both you and Mr. Daley maintain extremely busy schedules, but we also believe that the permitting issue remains a serious problem that impacts the life of every American and deserves your administration's attention. We look forward to meeting with Mr. Daley at his earliest opportunity.

Sincerely,



Mary L. Landrieu
United States Senator



David Vitter
United States Senator



Rodney Alexander
United States Representative



Charles W. Boustany, Jr.
United States Representative



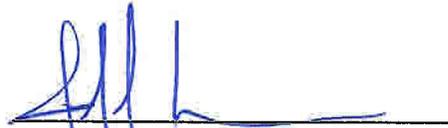
Steve Scalise
United States Representative



Bill Cassidy
United States Representative



John C. Fleming
United States Representative



Jeff Landry
United States Representative