Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 3, 2009

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing today to urge you to allow areas in the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) to remain open for oil and gas exploration and development as your Administration reviews the five-year offshore drilling plan. As you know, at the height of our nation's energy crisis last year, the American people spoke with one voice to express their outrage when they saw that not only were we dependent upon foreign oil, but furthermore, that energy resources located within American territory were locked away and could not be developed. Our national vulnerability was on plain display for the American public last summer because we lacked a coherent energy policy to allow for responsible energy exploration and development.

Especially in these times of economic crisis, policy changes that would further eliminate or stifle American jobs should be off-limits. A recent ICF International study on energy concluded that developing these currently untapped energy resources would create more than 160,000 jobs by the year 2030. Additionally, it is estimated that $1.7 trillion of government revenue would be raised from tapping the billions of barrels of oil and trillions of cubic feet of natural gas under the deep oceans off our coast.

Our country needs to remain on the path to American energy independence, and we believe this is a critical and achievable goal. Energy exploration means more jobs and stronger national security, nothing less is at stake. We respectfully urge that you allow the five-year offshore drilling plan to continue because it is vital to our economy. Moreover, energy exploration can be achieved responsibly with the needs of our environment in mind. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Rep. Kevin Brady (TX-08)

Rep. John Shimkus (IL-19)

Republican Leader John Boehner (OH-08)

Republican Whip Eric Cantor (VA-07)

Cc: The Honorable Ken Salazar, Secretary of the Interior

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