

JOHN BARRASSO M.D.
WYOMING

307 DIRKSEN SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
202-224-6441

United States Senate

COMMITTEES:
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

FOREIGN RELATIONS

INDIAN AFFAIRS
RANKING

December 7, 2010

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

Dear Secretary Salazar:

For nearly two years, the Department of the Interior has aggressively pursued an agenda opposed to oil and natural gas exploration on public lands. At the Department's recent 'Forum on Natural Gas Hydraulic Fracturing on Public Lands,' you expressed an interest in imposing additional, new regulations on onshore oil and natural gas production. The information provided by the two state regulators at the forum demonstrated that states have the expertise and regulatory framework to effectively regulate hydraulic fracturing. I oppose adding burdensome, new red-tape that will further discourage oil and gas production on public lands in the West.

The states have primary experience regulating oil and gas development, including hydraulic fracturing. Their regulations have defined the management structures to protect the environment. The State of Wyoming recently updated its oil and gas regulations to increase transparency for chemicals used in hydraulic fracturing. These regulations apply to oil and gas development, whether it's federal land, state land, or private land. At the Interior Department's Forum, the Supervisor of the Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, Tom Doll, made this point very clear: "in Wyoming we require a permit to be submitted for our approval even if it is on federal minerals."

Oil and natural gas production is critical to jobs and economic development in Wyoming and throughout the western United States. I request your prompt response to the following questions:

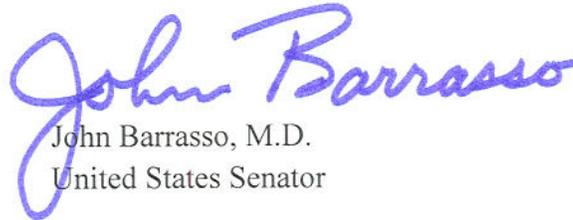
1. What specific changes to existing federal onshore oil and natural gas policies is the Department of the Interior considering?
2. Has the Department compiled existing state oil and gas regulations related to hydraulic fracturing?
3. What substantive evidence has the Department collected to suggest the existing state and federal regulatory process does not adequately function?

The Honorable Ken Salazar
December 7, 2010
Page Two

4. Will the Department commit to conducting an economic analysis prior to finalizing any changes to the federal onshore oil and natural gas program?
5. Is the Department planning to solicit input from impacted state regulatory agencies and the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission?

Washington overreach hurts local economies and undercuts job growth. Before adding more red-tape, I encourage you to consult with Congress and state regulatory agencies. That way you can avoid further jeopardizing jobs and local economies in the West.

Sincerely,



John Barrasso, M.D.
United States Senator