

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 14, 2011

Mr. Harv Forsgren  
Regional Forester  
U.S. Forest Service  
Intermountain Region  
324 25th Street  
Ogden, UT 84401

Dear Mr. Forsgren:

Forest Supervisor Buchanan's recent decision to cancel federal oil and gas leases on 44,720 acres in the Bridger-Teton National Forest (BTNF) is cause for grave concern. This ill-advised decision takes a dangerous step to reduce America's energy security, tramples on the property and contract rights of private companies, and prevents the development of oil and gas reserves. We write to urge your reconsideration of this decision.

Supervisor Buchanan's lease cancellation decision comes as political turmoil in the Middle East threatens disruptions of the world's oil supply and resultant significant increases in crude oil prices over the last month. Americans will continue to be subjected to the supply and price volatility of gasoline, heating oil, and other petroleum products if federal agencies create unnecessary barriers to the development of domestic energy resources.

The direct result of the BTNF lease cancellations is a decrease in domestic production capabilities, and a loss to the federal government of millions of dollars in non-tax revenue. By the Forest Service's own estimates, the hydrocarbons at issue are between 7.4 million and 15.1 million barrels of oil and between 139 billion and 255 billion cubic feet of natural gas. If this cancellation decision stands, these hydrocarbons will never be produced at precisely the time when we should be producing every resource available to us. In addition, the BLM must repay the purchase price for the 44,720 acres and the American taxpayer may be subjected to sizable legal claims for damages from the oil and gas companies who own these leases. We cannot imagine why the Forest Service would ignore these serious economic impacts at a time of historic federal budget deficits.

Beyond these serious direct costs lurks a more insidious indirect cost that we cannot ignore. The Forest Service decision to cancel lawfully auctioned and issued federal oil and gas leases sets a dangerous precedent that undermines the integrity of the lawfully established competitive oil and gas leasing process. Department of the Interior Secretary, Ken Salazar has acknowledged that federal oil and gas leases legally acquired and issued by the BLM are entitled to contractual property rights which ought to be defended. If not reversed, the BTNF Supervisor's decision would place the BLM in the impossible position of either (a) disregarding the Forest Service's cancellation decision in order to honor BLM's legal obligations to leaseholders, or (b) violating BLM's obligations to leaseholders by following the Forest Service's cancellation decision. This

is not the leadership Americans expect from our federal land managers or the wise stewardship of federal monies taxpayers expect.

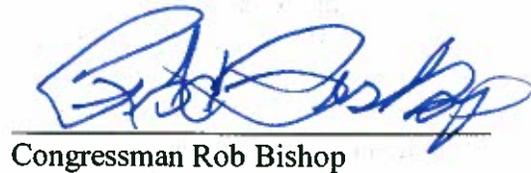
More concerning, this decision comes at a time when the President has called for increased production of America's oil and gas resources. In his remarks last week before students at Georgetown University, President Obama said, "Now, meeting the goal of cutting our oil dependence depends largely on two things: first, finding and producing more oil at home; second, reducing our overall dependence on oil with cleaner alternative fuels and greater efficiency. This begins by continuing to increase America's oil supply." Your actions are inconsistent to the President's expressed views on American oil and gas production.

We strongly urge you to reconsider this decision and allow the development of the 44,720 acres of oil and gas leases in the BTNF to proceed in a responsible manner. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



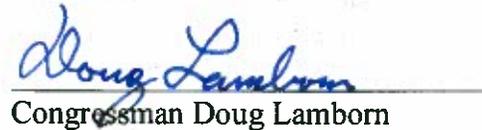
Congressman Steve Pearce



Congressman Rob Bishop



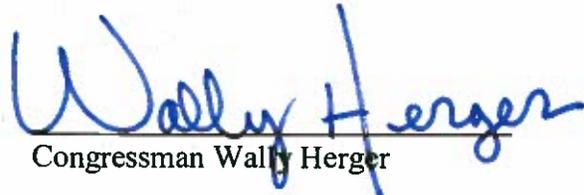
Congressman Mike Simpson



Congressman Doug Lamborn



Congressman Cynthia Lummis



Congressman Wally Herger



Congressman Tom McClintock

cc: Mr. Tom Tidwell, Chief  
U.S. Forest Service