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## **Hensarling/DeMint Announce Effort to Protect American Energy Freedom Day**

*Only 61 Days Remain Until Americans Can Access Own Energy Supplies*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congressman Jeb Hensarling (R-TX), Chairman of the House Republican Study Committee, and Senator Jim DeMint (R-SC), Chairman of the Senate Steering Committee, today announced a bicameral effort to protect American Energy Freedom Day on October 1, 2008. On that day, the current prohibitions on energy leasing on most of the Outer Continental Shelf and on oil shale leasing on federal lands will expire – unless the Democrat controlled Congress proactively acts to extend them. As of today, *only 61* days remain until Americans are able to access our own energy supply.

Hensarling and DeMint are circulating letters to Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Majority Leader Harry Reid on behalf of the millions of Americans currently feeling pain at the gas pump and seeking to increase production of American energy.

**“It is our hope that Democrats and Republicans will stand together to support American Energy Freedom Day on October 1, 2008. On this day, the current prohibitions on oil and gas exploration off the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) and in the oil-shale fields of the West will expire, giving Americans the freedom to access their own energy and providing them with relief from sky-high prices at the pump,”** reads the letters. **“We strongly encourage you to allow the expiration of these prohibitions on American energy exploration and production, as scheduled under current law, and we will actively oppose any attempt to extend them. Now is not the time to deny Americans access to their own energy supply.”**

On October 1, 2008, as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2008 (Public Law 110-161), prohibitions on energy exploration will expire, immediately making vast amounts of American petroleum and natural gas available for leasing activities, to the benefit of all Americans currently coping with high energy costs. Estimates from the Minerals Management Service and the Bureau of Land Management indicate that there are upwards of 18 billion barrels of recoverable crude oil on the currently off-limit areas of the Outer Continental Shelf, as well as more than 55 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. Estimates of American oil shale vary widely but range from hundreds of billions of barrels to trillions of barrels of oil.

**“On October 1st, the bans on offshore drilling and oil shale recovery will end, enabling us to finally be able to develop more American energy – unless Democrats**

**actively prohibit exploration.”** said Congressman Hensarling. **“Utilizing these sources of American energy is needed to lower gas prices and to reduce our dependence on foreign oil. I hope that Speaker Pelosi and Democrats in the House and Senate recognize the pain Americans are feeling and will not actively enact legislation to block the development of American Energy.”**

**“October 1st is going to be a great day for all Americans, because our nation will finally be able access our energy resources and bring down prices at the pump,”** said Senator Jim DeMint. **“For over 25 years, Democrats have denied Americans the freedom to access their own energy, making our nation more and more dependent on foreign oil. Now is the time for Democrats to step aside and allow Americans to access their own energy supply. We must protect American Energy Freedom Day, and allow the prohibitions on American energy exploration to expire so we can reduce energy costs for all Americans.”**

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*Congressman Jeb Hensarling is Chairman of the Republican Study Committee (RSC).*