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Rep. Huffman thanks Obama administration, asks for future Arctic protection

Washington — [A coalition of 51 representatives led by Rep. Jared Huffman \(CA-02\)](#) showed their support for America's Arctic Ocean by sending a letter to Interior Secretary Sally Jewell, thanking her for cancelling the 2016 and 2017 lease sales and asking the Interior Department to remove the Arctic Ocean from the draft 2017-2022 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program.

Rep. Huffman was joined by fifty-one of his colleagues. The letter highlighted the challenges posed in the Arctic such as climate change, threat of oil spills and pollution, and underlined the fact that the Arctic is unsuitable for leasing, exploration, and drilling.

"The Arctic Ocean is one of the last great wild and pristine expanses of ocean with vibrant marine life," Huffman said. "We know that oil drilling in this harsh environment carries unacceptable risks of catastrophic oil spills that would cripple this ocean ecosystem. I thank Secretary Jewell and this Administration for their actions on cancelling the lease sales, and urge them to move forward with further protection from future leases."

The following are some excerpts from the letter:

- "...thank you for your announcement cancelling Chukchi Sea Lease Sale 237 and Beaufort Sea Lease Sale 242, the proposed 2016 and 2017 lease sales in the Arctic Ocean. ..."
- "...we support your prudent decision to deny requests by Shell and Statoil for lease suspensions in the Arctic Ocean"...
- "...we hope that the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, and the Fish and Wildlife Service will ensure that any future proposed explorations are held to the highest possible standards and fully comply with all aspects of the law." ...
- "...The challenges already posed to this region by climate change, paired with the threat of oil spills and pollution, make the Arctic unsuitable for leasing, exploration and drilling." ...
- "...the need to keep greenhouse gas emitting fuels in the ground as part of a strategy to fight climate change is a compelling reason for the Department of the Interior to remove the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas from draft 2017-2022 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program."...

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