



Southern Alliance for Clean Energy Statement on President Obama's Energy Security Remarks

Knoxville, Tenn. (March 31, 2010) Today, President Obama outlined his administration's proposal to open the coastline from the Mid-Atlantic states to the Gulf of Mexico to oil and natural gas exploration. The plan would release 167 million ocean acres from protection under federal law and put thousands of miles of coastal habitat and communities at risk.

The President stated that this announcement is part of a much broader strategy that will move our nation's economy from running on fossil and foreign oils to one that "relies more on homegrown fuels and clean energy."

Statement of Dr. Stephen A. Smith, Executive Director of the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy

"Opening up extensive tracks of our southeastern coast to offshore drilling offer a false promise of reducing our dependence on foreign oil. We are disappointed that the Administration is willing to risk our national coastal treasures from the impacts of drilling even as the President acknowledges drilling alone cannot meet our long-term energy needs.

"Although this proposal is calling for the opening up of federal waters to oil exploration, the onshore infrastructure associated with these activities will change the face and integrity of coastal communities throughout our region. Over 2,000 miles of southeastern shoreline, steeped in rich cultural history would be forever altered for insignificant short-term gains.

"Not only would offshore drilling threaten coastal habitats and place our coastal tourism economies at risk, it is the wrong solution as we seek clean energy options to address climate change. Instead of directing tax-payer dollars toward private companies to extract unsustainable and non-renewable resources, we should be boldly embracing energy efficiency and renewable energy options. Offshore energy sources such as wind and wave energy can help us break our addiction to fossil fuels while moving towards a clean energy economy. This is the kind of change we are looking for.

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