

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 9, 2010

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C St NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Secretary Salazar:

As you are aware, we have strongly disagreed with this administration's approach on the critically important issue of oil and natural gas production on federal lands in the west. Production of oil and natural gas on federal lands in the west is vital to providing the necessary energy that this country requires. In addition, many communities, including in our state of Utah, rely upon the jobs created by this important activity.

One of the actions of which we have been critical is the manner and justification for the administration's decision to cancel the 77 oil and gas leases following the December 2008 Utah BLM oil and gas lease sale. It has been brought to our attention that the department's Inspector General has issued an investigative report related to the lease sale that indicates that it is the Inspector General's conclusion that no inappropriate actions occurred in relation to the sale. This appears to run counter to the justifications that we have been given in the past for the administration's decision to cancel the oil and gas leases.

Given the uncertainty of oil and natural gas production in the Gulf of Mexico right now, we believe that it is essential that Congress, in exercising its oversight responsibilities, be given access to these documents so that it may draw its own conclusions about the importance of producing oil and natural gas from federal lands. We therefore request the Inspector General investigative report be made public. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Orrin G. Hatch
United States Senator



Robert F. Bennett
United States Senator

RFB:nc