



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
HOUSE OF DELEGATES

RICHMOND

WILLIAM J. HOWELL
SPEAKER

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:
RULES (CHAIRMAN)

TWENTY-EIGHTH DISTRICT

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Statement of House Speaker William J. Howell on Obama Administration's Decision to Open Offshore Virginia Energy Resources to Exploration & Development

– Speaker Wrote Administration last summer urging Progress on Delayed Job-Creating Lease Sale –

RICHMOND, VA – Virginia House of Delegates Speaker William J. Howell (R-Stafford) today said it was “welcome news” that the Obama Administration had approved an offshore energy exploration lease plan benefitting Virginians at a time when gasoline prices are rising and people need more jobs and opportunities:

“The removal of previous obstacles in the form of congressional and presidential moratoria is welcome news and presents Virginia with an ideal opportunity to advance the exploration and development of natural gas and oil off our shores. Developing these resources will attract investments, create thousands of new jobs and promote more economic opportunities throughout our Commonwealth.”

“While state lawmakers have passed law to encourage the development and production of renewable energy, the simple reality is fossil fuel-based sources will continue to be the major energy supplier for the near term. That’s why the federal lease of the 2.9 million acres 50 miles offshore of Virginia will improve Virginia’s – and America’s – energy security as well as assist in meeting growing demand.

“Today’s action is a positive step forward in demonstrating that the United States will pursue domestic exploration and production to help us achieve greater energy independence from foreign oil. But we need to continue working to deliver practical solutions and real results that will lower gas prices, increase U.S. energy production, promote new clean and renewable sources of energy and encourage greater efficiency and conservation.”

On August 25, 2009, Speaker Howell wrote U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and offered his strong support for the previously scheduled lease of Virginia’s offshore exploration rights – specifically known as federal Sale 220 – in 2011. He urged the Obama Administration to “move forward on the lease of Sale 220 in an expedited manner without delay so Virginians can begin benefitting from the news jobs the development will create as well as the safe, affordable energy it will produce.” A copy of the full letter is attached.

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