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## News Release

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### **Salazar Announces BLM Onshore Oil & Gas Lease Sales Garnered \$233 Million for Taxpayers in 2012**

*31 auctions offered six million acres; 33 lease sales set for 2013*

WASHINGTON – As part of President Obama’s all-of-the-above energy strategy to continue to expand safe and responsible domestic energy production, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today announced that onshore oil and gas lease sales conducted by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in 2012 generated \$233 million for American taxpayers. In 2013, the BLM will hold 33 lease sales around the country. Since President Obama took office, domestic oil and gas production has grown each year, with domestic oil production in 2011 higher than any time in nearly a decade and natural gas production at its highest level ever. Foreign oil imports now account for less than 50 percent of the oil consumed in America – the lowest level since 1995. These sales build on that record and the President’s goal of responsibly leveraging our domestic resources.

“Developing energy resources on public lands creates jobs and helps power our future as the economy continues to gain strength,” said Salazar. “The President is committed to an all-of-the-above approach to safely and responsibly developing our conventional and renewable energy resources on public lands. Domestic oil and gas production continues to increase every year of this Administration while imported foreign oil continues to decrease, which is good for the economy, good for jobs, and good for America.”

In calendar year 2012, the BLM held 31 onshore oil and gas sales and received bids on more than 1.4 million acres of public land in 1,707 parcels. The BLM offered 2,315 parcels of land in calendar year 2012, which is 32 percent more than in 2011 and 41 percent more than in 2010. The parcels offered in 2012 covered more than 6 million acres, which is 38 percent more than the acres offered in 2011, and more than twice the number offered in 2009. The 1,707 parcels of land receiving bids in 2012 was 32 percent more than in 2011, 57 percent more than in 2010, and 30 percent more than in 2009.

The largest sale was held on January 24 in Billings, Montana, in which 59 parcels covering 14,762 acres of public land brought in more than \$36 million – an average price of \$2,437 per acre.

The BLM has [scheduled 33 oil and gas lease sales in calendar year 2013](#), including auctions in California, Colorado, the Eastern States, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, and Alaska. The BLM conducts sales based on nominations received from industry that are evaluated to determine eligibility and availability for leasing before being delineated into individual parcels.

Revenues from domestic oil and gas production on public lands and federal offshore areas, totaling more than \$12 billion this year, are shared among federal, state and tribal governments and represent one of the largest nontax sources of US government funds. Revenues generated by BLM's 2012 oil and gas auctions are part of this annual total and the price that drillers are willing to pay for onshore parcels has more than tripled in the past three years, compared to the last 25 years. Since 1988, the average price paid per acre was \$55, while over the past three years the average was \$210 per acre.

Today's announcement reflects the Obama Administration's efforts to increase certainty for industry by reducing the conflict, litigation, and protests that have tied the nation's oil and gas leasing program in knots for years. The percentage of BLM leases protested declined again in fiscal year 2012, which ended Sept. 30, continuing a trend that began in 2009. Protests were lodged on fewer than 18 percent of the 2,064 parcels offered for sale during FY 2012, the lowest percentage since FY2003, when the filing of protests began to accelerate. Protests, which can cause delays, court battles and increase development costs, reached a high of more than 47 percent in 2009. In response to this gridlock, in May 2010, [Interior Secretary Ken Salazar undertook reforms to the leasing program](#) that have resulted in fewer protests.

“Under our ‘smart-from-the-start’ strategy, the BLM has done more planning earlier in the leasing process, that includes engaging the public and evaluating environmental concerns,” said Acting BLM Director Mike Pool. “This year's successful lease sales reflect this Administration's commitment to balanced and responsible development of America's conventional and renewable energy resources.”

BLM leasing reforms have established a more orderly, open, and environmentally sound process for developing oil and gas resources on public lands. In areas where significant new oil and gas development is anticipated, the BLM now works with the public to develop Master Leasing Plans that help guide industry to lower-conflict areas for development.

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