



## American Association of Petroleum Geologists Statements

### U.S. Onshore Access

**Issue:** U.S. federal lands in the lower 48 states and Alaska contain potentially large domestic oil and natural gas resources, yet in many cases access to these lands is either prohibited or highly restricted, preventing the development of these resources on behalf of the American people. Debate about access to these lands is centered on domestic petroleum production and environmental impact.

**Background:** The percentage of domestic oil consumption from foreign imports has increased from 19 percent in 1972 to 67 percent in 2009. Similarly, while the increase in natural gas production from unconventional reservoirs, such as shale gas, has helped to meet demand, supply from conventional reservoirs continues to decline, and the rate of decline has increased.

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages 253 million acres of onshore land in the United States – more land than any other U.S. government agency. This land is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of mineral rights throughout the nation. As a result of advances in technology and improved understanding of petroleum systems, much of this land has the potential to produce oil and gas to meet vital national energy needs, create jobs, and deliver royalty payments to the U.S. Treasury.

However, policies and regulatory actions, which create unnecessary barriers to orderly, expanded, and environmentally sound development of vital oil and gas resources, limit these benefits that would otherwise accrue to the American people. The result is fewer oil and gas wells drilled, and ultimately, less oil and gas produced from onshore U.S. federal lands.

**Statement:** AAPG believes that U.S. onshore oil and gas resources are a vital national resource that can be developed responsibly while also protecting critical environmental values. AAPG supports the BLM's stated goal of consistent and predictable leasing and permitting processes that are resilient to protest and litigation. However, BLM policies and regulations need to ensure that leasing and permitting are carried out in an efficient and predictable manner, fully adhering to established law, and without unnecessary delay. New regulations must be accompanied by adequate staffing of federal agencies to ensure timely action on leasing and permitting decisions. Decisions on offering new leases

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As a professional, scientific association, AAPG is a credible source of information of interest to a wide spectrum of individuals. AAPG has a proud history of providing information to decision-makers and the public on matters concerning the science and profession of petroleum exploration.

In this role, AAPG has given testimony before the U.S. Congress, provided information to lawmakers on a national, state and local level, and has adopted statements that the association believes are of importance.

The following are the statements that are currently in effect. These were revised or added in June 2007 and will be reviewed periodically. They can also be accessed at: <http://dpa.aapg.org/gac/index.cfm>

must fully consider the impact of oil and production from the lands in question and the resulting benefits of job creation, royalty payments, tax revenue, and increased economic activity.