

**United States Senate**

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 16, 2012

The Honorable Ken Salazar  
Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240-0002

Dear Secretary Salazar:

On March 30, 2012, the State of Alaska resolved its long-running litigation with ExxonMobil and other leaseholders regarding the Point Thomson field. This field holds a quarter of the North Slope's known natural gas as well as significant natural gas liquids reserves. The three major producers—ExxonMobil, ConocoPhillips and BP—have made it publicly known they are committed to bringing this resource to market in an expedited manner.

This is good news for Alaska, Alaskans, and the country as a whole. It means more jobs, more domestic energy production and more revenue for local, state and federal governments. I urge you to recognize this benefit and ensure the necessary permitting process within the Interior Department and other federal agencies is conducted in a timely, efficient and sensible manner. To this end, I hope you will consider utilizing the Interagency Working Group on Coordination of Domestic Energy Development and Permitting in Alaska; an entity created for situations such as Point Thomson.

Alaska and the producers who operate in the state have continually demonstrated the ability to develop and bring to market our natural resources in an environmentally sensitive and responsible manner. We ask that the opportunity to do so in Point Thomson is not prevented or unnecessarily postponed due to the federal permitting process.

I applaud the recent permitting decisions of the Interior Department concerning development in the Chukchi and Beaufort seas and the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. I hope to applaud future decisions regarding Point Thomson as well.

Please let me know if you need anything additional from our office. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Mark Begich  
United States Senator