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[Begich Commends Alaska Priorities in Energy and Jobs Legislation](#)

Offshore oil development, revenue sharing in bill, more progress needed on refining, trade, and adaptation

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U.S. Sen. Mark Begich said he welcomes the inclusion of several Alaska provisions in long-awaited comprehensive Senate energy and jobs legislation released today. But the bill, sponsored by Sens. John Kerry (D-MA) and Joe Lieberman (ID-CT), needs further improvement before it fully addresses Alaska's needs and reaches the Senate floor. The bill, sponsored by Sens. John Kerry (D-MA) and Joe Lieberman (ID-CT), needs further improvement before it fully addresses Alaska's needs and reaches the Senate floor.

The proposal includes several elements Begich has been pushing, including expanded Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) oil and gas production in Alaska, sharing a portion of OCS revenues with affected states and expanded opportunities for Alaska's natural gas.

"This bill's endorsement of off-shore domestic energy development and revenue sharing from it are essential for Alaska communities and Alaska's economy," Begich said. "It's important to get the balance right. While we need to reduce our dependence on foreign oil and consumption overall, Alaska can provide a tremendous amount of oil and clean burning natural gas that we're going to need for decades to come."

Begich has been working with the authors of the legislation, including Sen. Lindsay Graham (R-SC), to help them understand the key role Alaska can play in securing the country's economic and national security by reducing America's dependence on foreign sources of oil and gas. In March, Begich wrote a detailed letter to the Senate Majority Leader outlining Alaska's priorities for the energy bill, many of which are in the legislation.

The key provisions for Alaska and supported by Begich include:

- Outer-Continental Shelf oil and gas production - The legislation recognizes the importance of expanding oil and gas development and exploration in Alaska's Chukchi and Beaufort Seas can play in reducing America's dependence on foreign oil;
- Revenue Sharing - Under the legislation, states with OCS development will receive 37 percent revenue sharing as a result of the development in federal waters. Currently, Alaska is excluded from revenue sharing from OCS development;
- Natural Gas production support - Incentives for natural gas production that build a stronger market and could lead to increased interest in Alaska's natural gas line;

- EPA pre-emption on CO2 emissions - Would prohibit states from implementing tougher regulations on carbon emissions than are required by the Environmental Protection Agency.

"Today, the U.S. imports about three-quarters of the oil it consumes, much of it from countries where our best interests are not especially high on their priority list," Begich said. "Developing America's enormous energy resources by Americans and within America's borders is good for our economic security and good for our national security."

Begich identified several areas in the legislation that still need improvement, including how the legislation would affect refineries and other energy intensive and trade sensitive industries, as well as additional funding for adapting infrastructure.

"This bill is a dramatic improvement in terms of how it treats refineries and heavy industry and keeps them competitive. However, I intend to stay at the table to ensure that this will work for Alaska's refineries," he said.

The new energy bill also includes money for adaptation funding which is dedicated funding to assist Alaska communities on the front line of climate change with the costs of village relocation, infrastructure rebuilding and energy costs. But Begich says the \$75 billion in the bill that would be available to all states and foreign countries falls short of what will be needed. He said he will push for more adaption funds in the bill some of which should be dedicated specifically to Alaska, where the effects of climate change are already affecting Alaskans' lives and will continue to.

"Until my colleagues have a chance to visit Alaska, and have their eyes opened and knowledge enhanced, I don't think they will understand the size and scope of the costs and problems we face," Begich said. "I'll continue to do my best to educate the administration and other members of Congress."

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