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Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

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May 21, 2015

The Honorable Brian Salerno
Director
Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Director Salerno:

We would like to thank you for publishing the proposed rule on Blowout Preventer Systems and Well Control in the Federal Register on April 17, 2015, and to request that you extend the comment period for 30 days.

This rule, which we believe is long overdue, will help to make substantive improvements to the safety of offshore oil and gas operations on the Outer Continental Shelf, and will implement many of the recommendations made by numerous expert panels that investigated the tragic *Deepwater Horizon* blowout and oil spill of 2010. While the Department of the Interior took a number of positive steps in the immediate aftermath of that disaster, such as implementing some new safety standards and establishing your agency as an independent regulator, we believe that a considerable amount of work remains to be done. Some of that responsibility falls on—and has been shamefully neglected by—Congress, and we will continue to press our colleagues to provide additional authority to hold companies fully accountable for their actions on the Outer Continental Shelf. Some of that responsibility also takes the form of additional safety standards on blowout preventers, the critical piece of last-resort equipment that failed so spectacularly in April 2010.

Over five years have passed since then, and companies are drilling in the Gulf of Mexico at a breakneck pace, with more deepwater rigs operating now than before the accident. Every day that these standards are not in place keeps us at a higher risk of another accident. However, this rule is long and highly technical, and we believe that stakeholders deserve additional time beyond the initial 60-day comment period in order to review the rule. Therefore, we believe that an extension of 30 days to the comment period would be appropriate.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva
Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources



Alan S. Lowenthal
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy and
Mineral Resources