



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 3, 2011

The Honorable Sean Parnell
Governor of Alaska
Suite 1700
550 West Seventh Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

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Office of the Governor
Anchorage

Dear Governor Parnell:

Thank you for your recent letters regarding oil and gas development in Alaska and the importance of coordination across Federal agencies regarding permitting decisions.

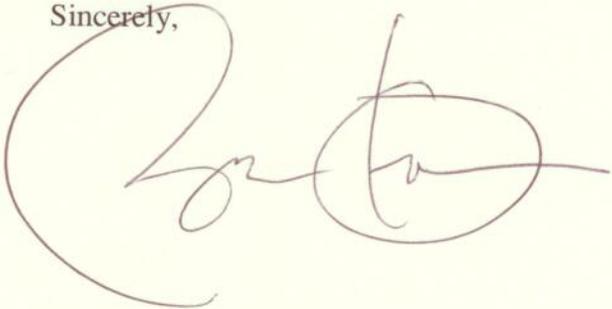
My Administration appreciates the importance of Alaska's vast natural resources, including both the significant potential for energy production and the unique challenges posed by development of the Arctic environment. That is why I recently announced new steps to encourage safe and responsible development in the Arctic. I have directed the Department of the Interior to conduct annual lease sales in Alaska's National Petroleum Reserve while respecting sensitive areas, and to extend the leases for certain areas off the coast of Alaska to give companies time to meet heightened safety and environmental standards for exploration and development.

Additionally, as referenced in your May letter, I am establishing a new team to coordinate work on Alaska drilling permits. My Administration shares your view that such coordination is critical—for purposes of good government, and in order to help increase safe and responsible domestic production and reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

As you know, a number of agencies within the Federal Government have mandates to ensure that Arctic development projects meet health, safety, and environmental standards. To that end, we are creating a high-level interagency working group to coordinate Alaska permitting. This group will formalize ongoing interagency collaboration in order to facilitate a more efficient permitting process in Alaska while ensuring that all permitting standards are fully met. It is my hope that the establishment of this Federal interagency working group will help enhance ongoing collaboration with the State of Alaska regarding oil and gas permitting matters. With further questions or for additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me. Moreover, my staff advises that they are already in contact with yours, and your counselors provide a valuable channel of communication between my Administration and Alaska State government.

I value your administration as a responsive and knowledgeable resource, and I look forward to ongoing communication as we consider policies that affect Alaska and our country, including the development of oil and gas reserves and the exploration of the potential of rare earth elements in Alaska.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'C' followed by a name that appears to be 'Carter'.