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Opinion roundup: Obama's offshore drilling policy

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Conservative pundits today are giving President Obama a bit of praise -- some grudgingly, others teasingly -- for his newly announced national offshore drilling policy. Environmentalists, meanwhile, find little to like in the overall announcement but are thankful areas near Bristol Bay remain off limits and there's time for more study in the Arctic.

(Click here for an ADN roundup of opinion from Alaska politicians, environmental groups and oil company executives.)

Ilya Shapiro, National Review Online: *Republicans, conservatives, tea partiers, libertarians, and all others who have (rightly) criticized Obama on health care, cap-and-trade, never-ending "stimulus," auto bailouts, ending D.C. school vouchers, and the rest of his domestic agenda have to acknowledge that for once he's doing something right. Yes, the president should be more open to Pacific and Alaska drilling - though there may be a bit of the latter now - but he's finally made a good decision (however grudgingly).*

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Anonymous Capitol Hill staffer, to AlterNet: *Obama preempts the other side's most resonant arguments, which forces them to come up with more and more extreme claims in order to differentiate themselves. In the end, he occupies the reasonable middle ground and his opponents are Palinized.*

Sarah Palin, via Twitter: *Drill, baby, drill.*

Jonathan Hiskes, Grist: *"A stunning concession to fossil-fuel companies."*

Mike Lillis, The Washington Independent: *[Compromise], it seems, is the political calculus behind today's announcement to expand the spots where offshore drilling will be allowed. But here's a note to the White House: It's not working. Even as environmentalists are screaming bloody murder, GOP leaders are already pouncing on the plan - which would open large expanses of the Atlantic, the Gulf of Mexico and the waters north of Alaska to oil drilling - as too limited in scope.*

Marc Ambinder, The Atlantic: *For a Democratic president, this is a pretty gutsy move to open the public debate about an energy bill. Or, well, maybe it's not: it's high-reward, low-risk; environmentalists will complain, but then again, environmentalists complain. Aside from the substance, which is beyond our ken, the politics of this move is easy: with one fell swoop, Obama deprives Republicans of the major talking point they'd use to object to more expansive government-based climate remediation and energy prospecting policy.*

Jon Talton, Seattle Times: *[In expanding drilling] President Obama, like his predecessors, mentioned energy "independence." Such a thing is not possible, especially since the U.S. hit national peak oil in 1973, and even less so since we were an oil superpower in the mid-20th century -- no small element in winning World War II. We will be more interdependent than ever.*

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Kevin Drum, Mother Jones: *When it comes to energy, conservatives are crazy about two things: nuclear power and offshore drilling. Now Obama has agreed to both. But does he seriously think this will "help win political support for comprehensive energy and climate legislation"? Wouldn't he be better off holding this stuff in reserve and negotiating it away in return for actual support, not just hoped-for support?*

John Broder, The New York Times: *While Obama has staked out middle ground on other environmental matters - supporting nuclear power, for example - the sheer breadth of the offshore drilling decision will take some of his supporters aback. And it is no sure thing that it will win support for a climate bill from undecided senators close to the oil industry, like Lisa Murkowski, Republican of Alaska, or Mary L. Landrieu, Democrat of Louisiana.*

Steven Benen, Washington Monthly: *As I understand it, the plan the White House has supported for months includes a give and take on energy -- Republicans would get the drilling and nuclear advances, while Democrats would get cap-and-trade. ... In other words, Obama has already effectively given Republicans what they wanted on energy. What is he getting in return?*

N.J. Beachum, Benzinga.com: *House Minority Leader John Boehner, however, expressed opposition to the plan, claiming that it "continues to defy the will of the American people." This will is described by Republicans as being in support of offshore oil drilling. Which means that the Republicans are essentially against an idea that they are for.*

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AllEyes wrote on 03/31/2010 08:23:27 PM:
Anybody with some knowledge in economics would understand the president, we can not become independent green from one day to another we don't have the money, the transition from fosils to a more friendly alternative source of energy will take years, our industries were designed to operate with derivates of oil. this transition will take place gradually.

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snakeoilr wrote on 03/31/2010 05:37:50 PM:
DRILLED BABY DRILLED!

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graykeeper wrote on 03/31/2010 03:11:39 PM:
It's hilarious. Like all those wealthy folks with expensive homes off the Virginia coast are going to allow drill rigs to spoil their million dollar view. Likely an bunch of antienvironmentalists just became die hard greenies. Ditto Cook Inlet. Check and Mate.

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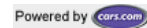
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