

Trump order to re-open drilling

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Associated Press



AP Photo/Elaine Thompson, File
The oil drilling rig Polar Pioneer is towed toward a dock in Elliott Bay in Seattle. Working to dismantle his predecessor's environmental legacy, President Donald Trump signed an executive order on Friday aimed at expanding drilling in the Arctic and opening other federal areas to oil and gas exploration



AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais
President Donald Trump gestures as he answers a question from a member of the media after signing an Executive Order in the Roosevelt Room of the White House in Washington, Friday.

WASHINGTON — Working to dismantle his predecessor's environmental legacy, President Donald Trump signed an executive order on Friday aimed at expanding oil drilling in the Arctic and Atlantic oceans.

With one day left to rack up accomplishments before he reaches his 100th day in office, Trump signed an order reversing some of former President Barack Obama's restrictions and instructing Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke to review a plan that dictates which federal locations are open to offshore drilling.

It's part of Trump's promise to unleash the nation's energy reserves in an effort to reduce oil imports and spur jobs, regardless of fierce opposition from environmental activists who say offshore drilling harms whales, walrus and other wildlife and exacerbates global warming.

U.S. oil production has boomed in recent years, primarily because of improved drilling techniques such as fracking that have opened up production in areas previously out of reach of drillers.

"This executive order starts the process of opening offshore areas to job-creating energy exploration," Trump said during a White House signing ceremony. "It reverses the previous administration's Arctic leasing ban and directs Secretary Zinke to allow responsible development of off-shore areas that will bring revenue to our treasury and jobs to our workers."

"Today," he said, "we're unleashing American energy and clearing the way for thousands and thousands of high-paying energy jobs."

The executive order aims to reverse part of a December

effort by Obama to deem the bulk of U.S.-owned waters in the Arctic Ocean and certain areas in the Atlantic as indefinitely off limits to oil and gas leasing.

It also directs Zinke to review the locations available for offshore drilling under a five-year plan Obama signed in November. The plan blocked new oil and gas drilling in the Atlantic and

Arctic oceans. It also stopped the planned sale of new oil and gas drilling rights in the Chukchi and Beaufort seas north of Alaska, but allowed drilling in Alaska's Cook Inlet southwest of Anchorage.

The order could lead to the opening of oil and gas exploration areas off Virginia and North and South Carolina, where drilling has

been blocked for decades. It could also re-open the door to the use of seismic surveys by energy companies to map potential drilling sites for oil and natural gas in the Atlantic Ocean.

The oil and gas industry has pushed for Atlantic drilling and pledged that exploration would be done safely, with lessons applied from the disastrous 2010 BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

Many lawmakers from Georgia to Virginia support offshore drilling, but the plan faces broad opposition from the fishing industry, tourism groups and even the U.S. military, which has said Atlantic offshore drilling could hurt military maneuvers and interfere with missile tests the Navy relies on to protect the East Coast.

More than 120 coastal cities and towns from New Jersey to Florida including cities such as Wilmington, North Carolina, Myrtle Beach and Charleston, South Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia have passed resolutions against Atlantic drilling and seismic testing.

BRIEFLY

Workforce board seeks one stop operator

LA GRANDE — The Eastern Oregon Workforce Investment Board is offering an opportunity to qualified applicants to complete a Request for Proposal for a One Stop Operator.

The proposal includes seven One Stop Centers in the Eastern Oregon region, which encompasses Baker, Grant, Harney, Malheur, Morrow, Umatilla, Union and Wallowa counties. The operator will serve a significant role in coordinating and streamlining access in regards to employment, education, training and support to individuals, particularly those with barriers to employment, in the Eastern Oregon area.

All interested parties are encouraged to attend a bidders conference. A detailed review of non-competitive information on the RFP will be discussed during the conference, which is Tuesday, May 9 from 2-3 p.m. at the WorkSource Center, 1901 Adams Ave., La Grande.

An electronic letter of intent to bid is requested to be sent to info@eowb.org by Friday, May 12. Although not required, the Workforce board wants to ensure bidders receive any subsequent guidance prior to the submission due date of Thursday, May 25.

The request for proposal package is available at www.eowb.org. For questions, contact Brenda Frank, grants & contracts administrator, at 541-963-3693 or brenda@eowb.org.

Job fair set for May 16

PENDLETON — A regional job fair will feature businesses from around the area that are recruiting for a variety of positions.

The event is Tuesday, May 16 from 2-6 p.m. at the Pendleton Convention Center, 1601 Westgate. Attendees are encouraged to bring their resume and be prepared to apply on the spot. Blue Mountain Community College will set up its business clothing closet and offer resume and interview tips.

Participating businesses include St. Anthony Hospital, Lamb Weston, Boise Cascade, Wildhorse Resort &

Casino and Mid-Columbia Bus Company. Other businesses can purchase booth space for \$35.

The job fair is presented by the BMCC, the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce and WorkSource Oregon. For booth space, call the chamber at 541-276-7411.

U.S. economy expansion weakest in 3 years

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. economy turned in the weakest performance in three years in the January-March quarter as consumers sharply slowed their spending. The result fell far short of President Donald Trump's ambitious growth targets and underscores the challenges of accelerating economic expansion.

The gross domestic product, the total output of goods and services, grew by just 0.7 percent in the first quarter following a gain of 2.1 percent in the fourth quarter, the Commerce Department reported Friday.

The slowdown primarily reflected slower consumer spending, which grew at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 0.3 percent after a growth rate of 3.5 percent in the fourth quarter. It was the poorest quarterly showing in more than seven years.

Despite the anemic first-quarter performance, the U.S. economy's prospects for the rest of the year appear solid. Growth is expected to be fueled by a revival in consumer spending, supported by continued strong job growth, accelerating wage gains and record stock levels.

Weakness in the first quarter followed by a stronger expansion in the spring has become a pattern in recent years. The government's difficulty with seasonal adjustments for the first quarter has been a chronic problem and may have shaved as much as 1 percentage point off growth this year.

The sharp slowdown in consumer spending in the first quarter was attributed to a collection of temporary factors: warmer weather, which shrank spending on heating bills, a drop-off in auto sales after a strong fourth quarter and a delay in sending out tax refund checks, which also dampened spending.

Court agrees to hold off ruling on carbon restrictions

WASHINGTON (AP) — In a blow to environmental groups, a federal appeals court agreed Friday to postpone a ruling on lawsuits that challenge Obama-era limits on carbon emissions.

The limits are part of the Clean Power Plan, a centerpiece of President Barack Obama's efforts to reduce emissions from existing power plants. The plan was challenged by a coalition of states and industry groups that profit or benefit from the continued burning of coal, the dirtiest of fossil fuels.

The Environmental Protection Agency asked the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit to put the legal fight on hold after President Donald Trump signed an executive order to roll back the plan.

Friday's order from the court agreed to postpone the case for 60 days and asks the parties for guidance on whether the rule should be sent back to the EPA to potentially be revised or repealed.

While not final, the postponement is letdown to environmentalists who

vehemently opposed the request for delay. They have urged the court to rule on the merits of the case, despite the change in administration.

"We are in a race against time to address the climate crisis," said Vickie Patton, a lawyer for the Environmental Defense Fund. "Climate progress and clean energy cannot be stopped by the litigation tactics of polluters."

The Supreme Court last year blocked the plan from taking effect while the appeals court considered whether it was legal. Ten

judges on the court of appeals in Washington heard arguments in the case last year and could have issued a ruling at any time.

"Today's decision by the court is a positive step toward protecting West Virginia coal miners and those who depend upon their success," said West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey, who was among those who challenged the rules. "The court recognized the landscape has changed and that a decision on the merits is not appropriate at this time."



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