



AN E&E PUBLISHING SERVICE

Monday, July 12, 2010

OFFSHORE DRILLING: Enviro group sues for Salazar leasing docs

Noelle Straub, E&E reporter

The Center for Biological Diversity today sued the Interior Department for failing to provide information requested under the Freedom of Information Act related to the Interior secretary's decisions on oil and gas leasing.

On May 18, the group filed a FOIA request seeking all phone logs and correspondence to or from Interior Secretary Ken Salazar related to the approval of offshore oil and gas leasing, along with notes of meetings Salazar attended on the topic.

A response to the request was due July 1, after Interior invoked a 10-day working extension. The [lawsuit](#) filed today in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia asks the court to order Salazar to immediately respond to the request and promptly provide the documents.

CBD said it wants documents related to proposals on expanding drilling off the Atlantic Coast and Alaska and in the eastern Gulf of Mexico and to approvals of numerous offshore leases and drilling plans in the Gulf.

"Secretary Salazar has been cozy with the offshore drilling lobby for many years," CBD Executive Director Kieran Suckling said in a statement. "There is no question that BP and other oil companies were integral to his decisions to expand offshore oil drilling. We want to know who Salazar was talking to, what was said, and what deals were made."

An Interior spokeswoman said the department could not provide comment on a lawsuit.