

President Obama says no to new oil and gas drilling in some ocean waters

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Adult female walrus rest on an ice flow with young walrus in the Eastern Chukchi Sea, Alaska, in this July 2012 file photo. Photo: S.A. Sonsthagen/U.S. Geological Survey via AP

HONOLULU, Hawaii — President Barack Obama made a new rule about the oceans. He is forbidding oil and gas drilling in parts of two oceans. Oil and gas are fossil fuels. Burning them makes greenhouse gases.

These gases become trapped in the air above us. They store heat, making the world hotter. Scientists call this global warming.

President Obama wants to fight global warming. His new law will protect the Arctic Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean. No one will be allowed to drill there.

The law will also test Donald Trump. Trump was elected in November. He will become the 45th president in January. Trump wants to do more oil drilling in the United States.

An Old Law Came In Handy

Obama is using an old law for his new rule. Not many people know about the old law. It was written in 1953. It lets the president stop oil drilling in parts of the ocean.

The White House said there were several reasons to stop oil drilling. First, it is bad for the planet. Also, parts of the Arctic Ocean are important to Native Americans in Alaska.

Obama's decision might also be a way to stop Trump. He wants to drill more. He said America should use all the fuel it has. Trump also wants to do more drilling in the ocean.

The new law could stop him. People are not sure how hard it will be to change the law. It is meant to be forever. This means a new president cannot change it, even if they want to.

The New Law Will Be Hard To Change

Some said there would be a way to still change the law. But White House officials said this was not true.

Some people wish the law was made stronger. One of them is Frank Knapp. He lives in South Carolina. He leads a group that supports small businesses. Knapp said he was "disappointed" by the law. He thought it would stop oil drilling in more of the Atlantic Ocean. But the law only protects part of the ocean.

Oil companies can still drill in the ocean along South Carolina. Knapp does not like this. He said the oil drilling is bad for the Earth. It hurts fishermen and other businesspeople in the area, he said.

President Makes Some Happy, Some Angry

Some lawmakers were happy about the law. Others were angry with President Obama.

Lawmaker Ed Markey praised the president. He said that stopping oil drilling would help "millions of Americans."

Rob Bishop is also a lawmaker. He does not like the new rules. He said that the president was breaking the law.

Quiz

- 1 How will the change in the law affect Donald Trump?
- (A) It will make it hard to drill for oil anywhere in the U.S.
 - (B) It will make it easy for him to change other laws in the U.S.
 - (C) It will make it harder to drill for oil in the Arctic Ocean.
 - (D) It will make it easy to drill for oil in other places in the U.S.
- 2 Based on the section "The New Law Will Be Hard To Change," which of the following statements is TRUE?
- (A) Everyone believes that the law is too strong.
 - (B) Some people believe that the law is not strong enough.
 - (C) Oil companies cannot drill anywhere off the east coast.
 - (D) Oil drilling helps the economy.
- 3 Read the selection from the section "The New Law Will Be Hard To Change."

He said the oil drilling is bad for the Earth. It hurts fishermen and other businesspeople in the area, he said.

What does the author mean by the phrase "it hurts fishermen and other businesspeople"?

- (A) Drilling can cause injuries for them.
- (B) Drilling can make it hard for them to do their work.
- (C) Drilling can destroy their homes.
- (D) Drilling will damage the environment.

- 4 Read the selection from the introduction [paragraphs 1-4].

Oil and gas are fossil fuels. Burning them makes greenhouse gases. These gases become trapped in the air above us. They store heat, making the world hotter. Scientists call this global warming.

What are "greenhouse gases"?

- (A) the gas that is used to run cars and other engines
- (B) gases in the air that make the earth warmer
- (C) gases found inside of greenhouses
- (D) the oil and gas that companies get by drilling into the ground

Answer Key

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