

US oil industry chief calls for more access to offshore

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American Petroleum Institute president Jack Gerard said the United States should relax the "regulatory onslaught" the US energy industry has seen in recent years

The head of the US oil industry called Wednesday for expanded offshore oil and gas production, delivering a call for deregulation two weeks before the inauguration of President-elect Donald Trump.

In a speech delivered in Washington, American Petroleum Institute president Jack Gerard said the United States should relax the "regulatory onslaught" the US [energy](#) industry has seen in recent years.

"Today, 94 percent of federal offshore acreage is off limits to energy production," Gerard said in prepared remarks at an annual state-of-the-industry event.

"Restricted [offshore areas](#) could hold 50 billion barrels, or more, of oil and more than 195 trillion cubic feet of natural gas."

The remarks came two weeks after President

Barack Obama banned new offshore oil and gas drilling in more than 100 million acres (40.5 million hectares) of the Arctic and parts of the Atlantic Ocean, a move that coincided with a similar freeze by Canadian authorities.

In decisions welcomed by industry, Trump has picked prominent figures and allies of the oil and gas industries to fill his new administration, including his designated heads of the State Department, former Exxon Mobil CEO Rex Tillerson, and Energy Department, former Texas Governor Rick Perry.

Trump has also tapped Oklahoma Attorney General and climate change denier Scott Pruitt to lead the Environmental Protection Agency and made the oil investor Carl Icahn an advisor for overhauling regulations.

Gerard said broad majorities of both Democrats and Republicans had favored energy development.

"We know we need more energy but we haven't seen any meaningful expansion of offshore access in decades," Gerard said.

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