

**Coalition to Protect the Rocky Mountain Front – Occidental Petroleum Corp. – Williams Cos. Anaconda Sportsman’s Club – American Fly Fishing Trade Association – Backcountry Hunters and Anglers – Big Sky Upland Bird Association – Boone & Crockett Club – Dawson County Rod & Gun Club – Federation of Fly Fishers – Flathead Wildlife Inc. – Helena Hunters & Anglers Association – Hellgate Hunters & Anglers – Laurel Rod & Gun Club – Montana Rivers – Montana Wilderness Association – Montana Wildlife Federation – Mule Deer Foundation – National Parks Conservation Association – National Wildlife Federation – Park County Rod & Gun Club – Public Land and Water Access Association – Russell Country Sportsmen’s Association – Skyline Sportsmen’s Association – Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership – Trout Unlimited – The Wilderness Society**

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**News for Immediate Release  
January 14, 2010**

**Contact:** Jodi Stemler, 703-915-1386

### **U.S. Senator Max Baucus, Energy Companies Announce the Retirement of Leases on Nearly 29,000 Acres in Montana’s Rocky Mountain Front**

*Oil and Gas Leases to be returned to the Bureau of Land Management*

**Helena, MT** – U.S. Senator Max Baucus (D-MT) today announced that five energy companies have agreed to relinquish oil and gas leases on nearly 29,000 acres in Montana’s Rocky Mountain Front adjacent to Glacier National Park. Baucus said this step “will help preclude oil and gas development and preserve fish and wildlife habitat in this unique area, which is important to citizens of Montana and the rest of the country.”

The oil and gas leases in the Badger-Two Medicine area of the Lewis and Clark National Forest were returned to the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and cannot be leased again because they are located in an area withdrawn from future leasing under a law that Senator Baucus helped enact in 2006. Collectively, Occidental Petroleum Corporation, Williams Cos., Rosewood Resources, XTO Energy Inc., and BP are relinquishing leases on 28,730 acres. The companies voluntarily relinquished their leases and did not receive any consideration for their actions.

“This is a great day for Montanans and I want to thank the energy companies for making this decision,” said Sen. Baucus. “The Rocky Mountain Front is considered by many to be a crown jewel of the West and a sportsmen’s paradise. Today’s protection of an additional 29,000 acres in the Front will help ensure future generations will get to experience and enjoy one of the most treasured and unique landscapes America has to offer.”

“We appreciate the leadership of Sen. Baucus for facilitating this transaction and for his commitment to the Rocky Mountain Front,” said Dr. Ray R. Irani, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Occidental. “Returning these leases in this iconic national forest to the federal government is the right thing to do and is consistent with Oxy’s commitment to safeguarding the environment.”

Senator Baucus has been working for over a decade to permanently withdraw sensitive lands along the Front from development. He wrote a provision that passed in 2006 that permanently protects the Rocky Mountain Front from oil and gas development.

- More -

Of the more than 152,000 acres of federal mineral leases originally held along the Front, nearly 111,000 acres will be permanently retired after this transaction. These protected federal lands will complement tens of thousands of privately owned acres already put into conservation easements in this area, much of it also a result of Senator Baucus' work.

"Williams is honored to support Senator Baucus in his effort to retire these leases," said Steve Malcolm, Williams' chairman, president and chief executive officer. "Helping to preserve the pristine environment of Montana's Rocky Mountain Front Range is something that Williams is proud to do. While natural gas will continue to be a vital part of our nation's energy future, it is important that we take advantage of opportunities that clearly provide mutual benefits to all parties."

The Badger-Two Medicine Area (BTM) is located on the Lewis and Clark National Forest, between Glacier National Park and the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. The BTM has no existing infrastructure or drilling activity and serves as key habitat for several high-profile species, including grizzly bears, wolves, bighorn sheep and cutthroat trout. The BTM is also considered sacred to the Blackfeet because it is the site of their creation story.

"The Badger-Two Medicine area of the Front is a vital part of our Blackfeet history and culture," commented Keith Tatsey, Chairman of the BTM Management Committee. "By retiring these leases, we will continue to have the opportunity to experience the life our ancestors understood would provide strength, subsistence, cultural identity and to connect us with our creator."

"Max has again stepped up to the plate for Montana. In 2006, Max passed the legislation to make this all possible and now thanks to him, Montanans will be able to protect their hunting, fishing and ranching heritage," said Karl Rappold, a third generation Montana rancher from Dupuyer.

Occidental Petroleum Corporation is an international oil and gas exploration and production company with operations in the United States, Middle East/North Africa and Latin America regions. Oxy is the fourth largest U.S. oil and gas company, based on equity market capitalization. Occidental is committed to safeguarding the environment, protecting the safety and health of employees and neighboring communities and upholding high standards of social responsibility in all of the company's worldwide operations. More information is available at [www.oxy.com](http://www.oxy.com).

Williams, through its subsidiaries, finds, produces, gathers, processes and transports natural gas. Williams' operations are concentrated in the Pacific Northwest, Rocky Mountains, Gulf Coast, and Eastern Seaboard. More information is available at [www.williams.com](http://www.williams.com).

The Coalition to Protect the Rocky Mountain Front is an organization of ranchers, hunters, anglers, outfitters, local business owners, Blackfeet Tribal members, public officials, conservationists, and other Montanans seeking to protect the Front for this and future generations. More information is available at [www.savethefront.org](http://www.savethefront.org).

An electronic copy of the map and photos from the Front can be found at <https://download.yousendit.com/TzY3K0dxUEM3N0JMWEE9PQ> until Jan. 18, 2010.