

HuffPost [reports](#):

Republicans have blocked President Barack Obama's pick for the No. 2 job at the Interior Department because of a flap over oil leases in Utah. In a 57-39 Senate vote, Democrats fell short of the 60 votes they would have needed to advance the nominee past GOP obstacles. It's the first time Republicans have blocked an Obama selection.

This is a real shame. It's hard to imagine anyone better qualified than David Hayes, a former Latham & Watkins partner. He served as the Deputy Secretary of the Interior during the Clinton Administration. At that time, he was confirmed unanimously by the Senate. He was involved in many of the Department's most difficult and important matters such as the negotiation of habitat conservation plans under the Endangered Species Act. In 2007, he was a Consulting Professor at Stanford University's Woods Institute for the Environment. While at Stanford, he directed a Woods Institute dialogue project on carbon offsets. He currently serves as the Chair of Stanford Law School's Board of Visitors. He has also co-authored books on climate change and global water issues.

The fact that the Senate blocked this appointment is appalling. But I guess qualifications don't have much to do with the politics of these decisions. Maybe Obama should consider a recess appointment.

ADDENDUM: *As Eric Biber's comment to this post indicates, maybe the appointment isn't completely dead after all.*