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Amid Sanctions, U.S. Oil Firm Exxon Mobil Wants to Restart Russia Drilling

April 20, 2017



Reed Saxon / AP

Oil company Exxon Mobil is petitioning the U.S. Government for special permission to continue its work in Russia,
the Wall Street Journal has reported.

The firm was forced to stop work on a joint project with Russia's Rosneft in 2014 due to economic sanctions imposed after the annexation of Crimea.

Exxon has reportedly asked the U.S. Treasury department to allow it to drill in the Black Sea since July 2015.

The company then launched a new push for approval in March, just weeks after its former chief executive, Rex Tillerson, became secretary of state, an unnamed source told The Wall Street Journal.

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The waiver application and Exxon's connections with the Trump administration are likely to come under close scrutiny by U.S. politicians, some of whom have accused the president of having inappropriate contact with Kremlin officials during his election campaign.

Tillerson, who has previously been awarded the Russian Order of Friendship, visited Moscow in an official visit last week.

The secretary of state reaffirmed Washington’s commitment to sanctions, and even said that new measures could be imposed in response for alleged Russian interference in the U.S. presidential election: “The issue of the election interference is a serious issue, one that could attract additional sanctions,” Tillerson said.

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