

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 10, 2008

The Honorable Norm Dicks  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2467 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Dicks:

We appreciate your leadership on the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee and recognize the ongoing challenges to provide responsible stewardship of our country's vast natural resources. Securing our domestic supplies of oil and natural gas resources is essential to continuing economic growth, reducing dependence on foreign energy sources, and preventing the outsourcing of U.S.-based jobs and manufacturing. As you determine the policies that provide for these resources, we ask that you continue to recognize the importance of domestic energy that is both reliable and affordable.

Americans use roughly 860 million gallons of oil products, such as gasoline, and 60 billion cubic feet of natural gas every day to drive, fly, keep warm and cool, and make indispensable items like medicines, fertilizers and fabrics. These products are woven into the structure of our daily lives.

If our policies lead to gasoline or natural gas supply disruptions and price spikes, or result in more dependence on foreign oil, it could make life more difficult for average working Americans. Please consider the following as you draft the 2009 Interior Appropriations bill.

**U.S. energy resources can help meet energy demand.** Estimates show that nearly 420 trillion cubic feet (Tcf) of natural gas and nearly 86 billion barrels of oil yet to be discovered offshore of the lower 48 states (also called the outer continental shelf). The estimated untapped U.S. oil & natural gas resources are five times greater than the oil resources of Canada and Mexico combined, and could replace current levels of oil imports from the Persian Gulf for over 100 years.

**Energy resources in the Mountain West public lands are also resources of national importance.** Federal lands comprise 31 percent of the total land area of the contiguous 48 states. According to DOE, proven natural gas reserves in five Mountain West states had increased to more than 57 trillion cubic feet, or almost one third of the natural gas reserves for the lower 48 states. Natural gas production in the states of the Mountain West is poised to increase to nearly 40 percent of the U.S. total by 2025. The Mountain West is a region where clean-burning natural gas can be found in abundance.

**Demand for oil and natural gas is increasing, but U.S. production has flattened.**

Government policies place more than 40 percent of the nation's natural gas resources on federal lands off-limits or prohibitively restricted. Restricting access will have the opposite effect, higher natural gas prices, lower economic growth, and loss of American jobs. Unfortunately, several different pieces of legislation have been introduced to limit our supplies of oil and gas resources.

Some have and will continue to urge you to use the appropriations process to restrict funding for some very important energy development programs. However, we believe that responsible development of oil and natural gas on our federal lands is essential to the nation's energy security and economic growth.

We look forward to working with you to ensure the environmentally safe development of oil and natural gas resources for reliable and affordable supplies of oil and natural gas. Thank you for your consideration of our views.



Gene Green  
Member of Congress



Nick Lampson  
Member of Congress



Dan Boren  
Member of Congress



Ruben Hinojosa  
Member of Congress

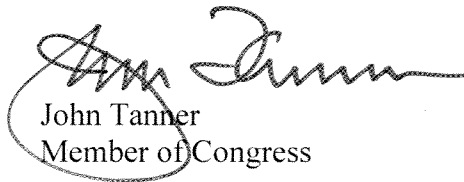
Sincerely,



Chet Edwards  
Member of Congress



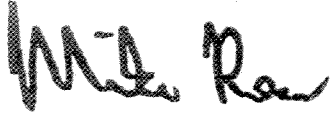
Charlie Melancon  
Member of Congress




John Tanner  
Member of Congress



Solomon Ortiz  
Member of Congress



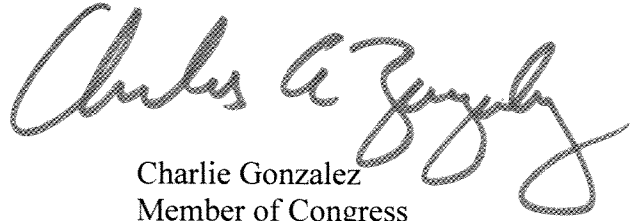
Mike Ross  
Member of Congress



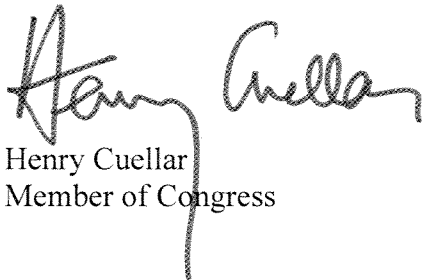
Neil Abercrombie  
Member of Congress



Jim Matheson  
Member of Congress



Charlie Gonzalez  
Member of Congress



Henry Cuellar  
Member of Congress