

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

March 21, 2000

The Honorable J. Dennis Hastert
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

We write to urge you to schedule immediately legislation reauthorizing the President's authority to operate the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. This authority, contained in the Energy Policy and Conservation Act, will expire on March 31, 2000, if Congress fails to pass reauthorizing legislation expeditiously.

As you may know, gasoline prices are at their highest level, in real terms, in a decade. Although Congress has known since March 23, 1999, that OPEC nations were cutting oil supplies, the House of Representatives has failed to take any steps to address the possibility of increased oil prices. In fact, three days after OPEC announced its production reductions, the Commerce Subcommittee on Energy and Power held hearings to investigate allegations that certain Clinton Administration foreign policies were having the effect of driving down the price of crude oil.

However, we find it reckless in the extreme that in the midst of rising gasoline prices and heating oil shortages in the Northeastern States, the House is on the verge of allowing the President's authority to use the strategic petroleum reserve to lapse. No less than two bills to reauthorize EPCA have been pending before the House of Representatives since October of last year. A bill reported by the Commerce Committee on October 1 of last year, H.R. 2884, not only reauthorizes EPCA, but also includes language to assist ailing domestic independent oil producers, yet the Majority has made no effort to bring that bill to the House floor. The other bill, S. 1051, has already passed the Senate and has been pending before the House Commerce Committee since September 30, 1999, without any action.

While it may be politically advantageous to make speeches about rising gas prices, it is the responsibility of those in power to govern. We, therefore, urge you to join with us on a bipartisan basis to ensure that the President has all the tools necessary to address these rising prices by immediately bringing either S. 1051 or H.R. 2884 to the floor for a vote.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Don Hargis

Paul E. Boni

Max Frank

Richard G. Kephart

Ross L. Per

Art Green

Patrick J. Kennedy

Charlie Stenholm

John S. Daddario

Joe Waller

Ed Markey

And Bley

Longway

Bill Hargis

M. J. [unclear]

Neil [unclear]

Bob [unclear]

Mark Udall

John Murry

Frank Pellow

Jim Oberstar

Rick Boucher

Paul Hoyer

Carl Levin

Pete Pappas

Mark Warner

Jeff Cost

Eric L. Engle

George Miller

John Dingell
Martin Frost
Rosa L. DeLauro
Patrick J. Kennedy
John E. Baldacci
Ed Markey
Tom Sawyer
Sam Gejdenson
Bob Etheridge
Dennis Moore
James Oberstar
Rick Boucher
David Obey
Bart Gordon
Peter DeFazio

David E. Bonior
Richard A. Gephardt
Robert Menendez
Charles Stenholm
J. Joseph Moakley
John B. Larson
Charles Rangel
Michael Capuano
Mark Udall
Frank Pallone, Jr.
Max Sandlin
Jerry Costello
Eliot L. Engel
George Miller