

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 29, 2001

The Vice President
Eisenhower Executive Office Building
Washington, DC 20501

Dear Mr. Vice President:

A front-page Los Angeles Times report, *Bush's Energy Plan Bares Industry Clout*, raises serious questions about the special access granted by your energy task force to executives and other representatives of coal, electricity, natural gas, and nuclear power companies. According to the report, these companies gave millions in contributions to Republican campaigns.

The article provides a detailed examination of the role of special interests in the operations of the task force, and it recounts numerous incidents of unusual access and influence. The article describes how the final report "adopts word for word a proposal on global warming from the U.S. Energy Assn.'s National Energy Strategy, which is dominated by trade groups"; how language in the final report was altered to favor Halliburton Co., the energy firm you formerly ran; how a close advisor to President Bush, Joe Allbaugh, participated in energy task force talks "with a direct bearing" on the interests of energy companies that employ his wife as a lobbyist; and how one company, Peabody Coal, and its affiliates and employees contributed \$900,000 to Republican campaigns, gained extraordinary access to the task force and the Administration's post-election advisory team, and issued a lucrative public stock offering less than a week after the release of the task force's final report.

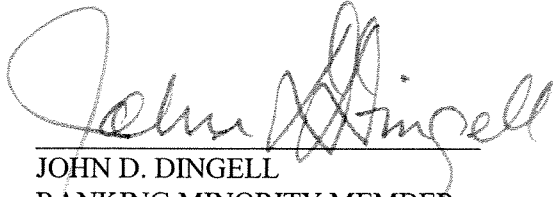
Since we first sought information about the operations of the task force on April 19, 2001, you have consistently refused to make public important information about the task force. In an action without precedent, you have even resisted providing the General Accounting Office with the most basic information about the task force, such as the identity of the interest groups that met with the task force or its staff.

In light of the recent report in the Los Angeles Times, we urge you to reconsider your position. The Los Angeles Times article raises serious questions about the role of special interests and campaign contributions on the task force's work. In fact, if the incidents reported by the Los Angeles Times are correct, special interests not only received unique access to the energy task force, they also wielded extraordinary influence in shaping the final energy policy.

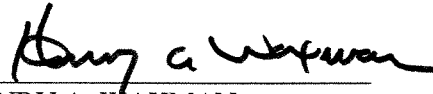
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Without question, these are exactly the types of issues that deserve public and congressional scrutiny, and it is in your interest, as well, that all of this information be made available. We urge you to cooperate fully with both our investigation and -- even more important -- the professional, independent, nonpartisan inquiry being conducted by GAO.

Sincerely,



JOHN D. DINGELL
RANKING MINORITY MEMBER
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE



HENRY A. WAXMAN
RANKING MINORITY MEMBER
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

cc: The Honorable David M. Walker