



**Barry Russell**  
**President**

August 7, 2003

The Honorable John Culberson  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Culberson:

On behalf of the Independent Petroleum Association of America (IPAA), representing thousands of domestic oil and natural gas producers, it is my honor to present you with the:

### **2003 Independent Oil and Natural Gas Award.**

This award recognizes elected representatives who work vigorously to maintain and enhance America's domestic oil and natural gas resources. Your voting record in the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress reflected your commitment to America's prosperous and secure future.

As you know, this vital industry has fueled this nation's entrepreneurial spirit, has provided us with the power to build our country and has protected us from total energy dependence. And the industry – thanks to your determination – will continue to provide this nation with the energy it needs to keep our economy strong and secure.

Independent producers drill 85 percent of the nation's wells and produce 75 percent of the country's natural gas and more than 40 percent of the country's crude oil supply (60 percent in the lower 48 states). While our member companies supply an enormous amount of the nation's energy needs, they are small businesses that generally employ less than 15 people.

Independent producers find these resources and produce these fuels with more environmental responsibility and workplace safety than any other country in the world. Advanced technology has revolutionized this strategic business. Today, 22,000 fewer wells are needed each year to reach the same amount of oil and natural gas from 20 years ago. Lighter rigs and slimhole drilling mean a smaller environmental footprint. Directional drilling means better protection of sensitive environments – from up to five miles away.

Thanks to your leadership, Congress is making domestic oil and natural gas a priority. In the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress, we have seen legislation that provides access to much-needed capital, as well as the resource base itself. It recognizes the advancements within the industry, and will improve the nation's economic and energy infrastructure. The provisions in these bills show the necessary commitment to establish a sound, balanced and sustainable domestic energy supply.

Congratulations on being selected as a recipient of this year's award. IPAA looks forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barry Russell", is written over a horizontal line.

Barry Russell  
President