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CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

January 8, 2009

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The Honorable Barack Obama
President-elect
Washington, D.C.

Dear President-Elect Obama,

As the 111th Congress prepares to consider an economic stimulus bill to address the current challenges facing the American people, we are presented with an opportunity to strengthen our country's energy portfolio and bolster the American energy industry. Affordable reliable energy has distinguished the United States from other industrial powers and remains a critical component for job growth in all sectors of the economy, maintaining the highest standard of living for all Americans. The economic stimulus package should protect the jobs of Americans by addressing our energy needs with American-made energy. The United States government must take steps to prepare our country for peak oil, invest in American-made energy, and improve our energy infrastructure.

Our current energy portfolio is critically out of balance. Across the nation, families are hurting from mounting energy costs. The current price of oil has been reduced, yet we must not allow this cyclical drop to give a false impression that the problem has been solved. While the US has held our oil demand steady relative to industrial competitors, more needs to be done to build the bridge from where we are today- 63 percent dependent on foreign sources of energy, and growing more dependent by the year – to the renewable and alternative energy future in which we all want to live. When we import energy, we export American jobs. In fact, the National Association of Manufacturers estimates that as a result of our dependence on foreign countries for energy, 3.1 million U.S. manufacturing jobs have been lost since 2000. This is not acceptable. By prioritizing our country's need for a secure and reliable domestic energy supply, we will stimulate the economy of today while ensuring the prosperity of tomorrow.

Peak oil, and the limited amount of oil in a world with growing energy needs, must be at the forefront of legislation addressing our economic health. According to leading scientists in the field, all of Earth's prolific petroleum basins have been located and most are partially to almost completely explored. The largest oil fields in the basins have been discovered and most are being produced. Production is clearly past its peak in many of the most prolific basins. Modest findings predict that the world may reach peak oil as soon as 2037 (EIA). We must prepare the U.S. economy to prosper while sustaining the drastic changes and challenges this entails. Investing in alternative energy research and

development, educating the American consumer about peak oil and wise energy use and continued petroleum efficiency efforts should be prioritized in the economic stimulus bill.

As long as we are dependent on foreign sources of energy, the American economy will lack security and endurance. I therefore support including funds within the economic stimulus package to bolster and accelerate the development of American-made energy. A wise energy strategy utilizes the resources and technology available in the present, while initializing and establishing the energy resources for the future. Oil may not be the fuel of the next century, but we must continue to wisely utilize it today to bridge us to the realization of our energy goals. I believe investments in domestic oil production on land, in the sea and from oil shale, must be made. Likewise, clean-coal technologies utilize domestic resources to produce reliable and cost-effective energy. Incorporating these options into our energy portfolio will help bridge us to the fuels of the future. We must also invest in nuclear energy. With the United State's energy demand projected to increase 45 percent by 2030 (EIA Annual Energy Outlook, 2008), the United States will need about 350,000 megawatts of new electric generating capacity. This equals hundreds of new power plants. American-made nuclear energy offers affordable and clean electricity and significant job creation. Renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, and hydro also offer significant opportunities to create American-made energy. The economic stimulus can simultaneously diversify our energy supply while supporting the American farmer by investing in biofuels. I have long advocated for a more diverse energy portfolio with special emphasis on American-made energy. Investing in these pursuits will create jobs, and help to keep industries and businesses in the United States, fortifying and stimulating our economy.

Integral to our energy future, the economic stimulus plan must act to develop our energy infrastructure. Direct investment in infrastructure will create jobs, while also making a lasting impact by modernizing our nation's energy support network. As our energy needs grow, so must our infrastructure. Our economy needs additional pipelines to carry fuel from plant to pump, as well as a stronger and larger electricity grid to bring new energy on to the circuit. Wind turbines are going up without transmission lines that can effectively harness their power, and growing cities are placing unmet demands for higher levels of electricity on the grid. Furthermore, developing our infrastructure will allow the resources of the United States to be put to more effective use. I strongly urge that language be included in the stimulus which would accelerate the 3-D seismic mapping of the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) so that the American people and policymakers may finally know exactly what oil stores exist within the boundaries of the United States. Information regarding the amount of oil in the OCS will allow the Department of the Interior to charge oil companies more for leasing privileges, while providing detailed information regarding our domestic oil reserves. At a time of lower national revenue, these leases would provide a stream of income for the U.S. Treasury that is not funded by tax-payers. Furthermore, we must invest in our oil production process by issuing more leases within the OCS. With oil companies paying the American people for oil produced for the American people, leasing areas within the OCS for environmentally responsible oil production is a win-win. I also strongly encourage investing in new U.S. refineries. No new refinery has been built in the United States in 30 years. During that time,

demand has increased, resulting in our importing about 12 percent of our gasoline needs. We have arrived at a crucial time regarding our nation's economic and energy needs, and we must act in the best interest of all Americans to secure their jobs, our nation's energy supply and our future prosperity.

As representatives of the people, we must rise to meet present challenges with solutions that prepare the nation for our future. Any economic stimulus bill considered in the 111th Congress should include initiatives preparing the nation for peak oil, investments in American-made energy, and funding for improving our energy infrastructure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Buyer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and a long, sweeping underline.

Steve Buyer
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker
The Honorable John Boehner, Republican Leader