

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 28, 2009

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C. Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Over the past year we have observed and monitored the inaction of the Department of Interior and the Bureau of Land Management in processing renewable energy project permits. The inability of the BLM to move forward in this regard is quite disturbing to us. The common sense approach of developing clean and renewable sources of energy that will lessen our dependence on foreign oil, create jobs in our ailing economy, and protect our environment, has, unfortunately, limped along at painfully slow speed for far too long.

There are approximately 160 active applications for solar energy projects on federally-controlled lands. As a Department of Interior news release dated July 7th states, the proposed solar projects have a projected capacity of powering approximately 29% of the nation's household electrical consumption. Some of these applications date back to 2005, and not a single application has been approved. This record of zero approvals is not acceptable. As American families face rising energy costs, losses in savings and the loss of jobs, the Bureau and your Department have continued to stand by unsatisfactory results.

Among other things, painfully burdensome Environmental Impact Statements thwart the progress of these applications, and thus the projects, jobs, and energy that would ensue. While we appreciate your indicated support, rhetoric only goes so far. The recent Department of Interior press release, which states that the Department will "fast-track initiatives for solar energy development on Western lands" is nice to hear. But action must follow these well intentioned words.

The people of this country and we expect that the Department will commit to working with the Congress to ensure the expedited use of BLM lands for solar energy. If the Department finds that the environmental review process continues to stand in the way of badly-needed solar energy, we would hope that the Department would work with the Congress to institute practical changes to current law.

Sincerely,



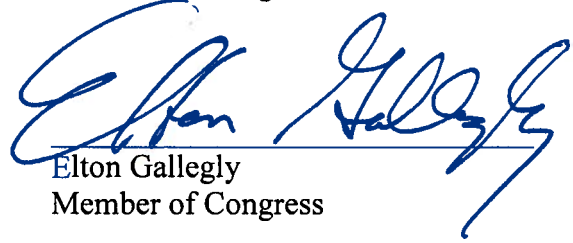
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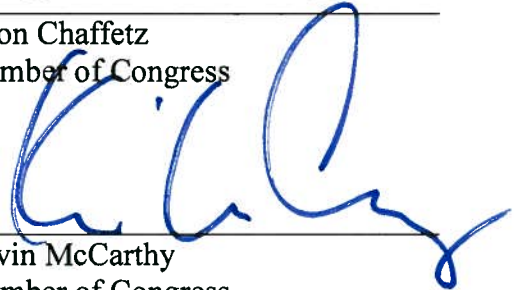
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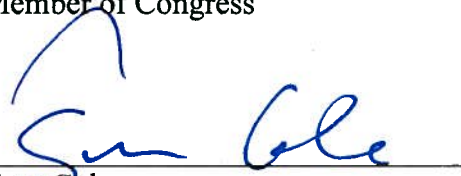
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