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DOMESTIC POLICY



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1405
February 23, 2011

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President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

I am deeply concerned that the unsettling developments we are witnessing in the Middle East could imperil our own national security. The Middle East is a primary source of the energy that fuels our Nation and the growing turmoil in the region threatens to cut off access to that energy. If we were to find ourselves cut off from that energy, the results would be catastrophic for the United States as we have done little over the past 40 years to make sure oil could not be used as a weapon against us.

I support development of renewable and alternative energy technologies but it will take years if not decades for those technologies to come to maturity. The reality is that our economy is heavily dependent on oil and natural gas whether we like it or not and we must deal with that reality. From Alaska to the Gulf of Mexico, and a whole host of other domestic locales scattered in between, we have the ability to become energy independent. Expanding domestic drilling is the only realistic solution to the current problem as the tools, infrastructure, and scale are already in place to address this crisis now and move us toward energy independence.

I am troubled that we are more dependent on foreign energy than ever before. In 1972, we imported 28% of our oil from foreign countries. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration's most recent figures, 62% of the oil consumed in the United States in 2009 came from other countries – more than double what it was in 1972. Unless we change course and provide Americans with energy independence, we continue to expose ourselves to the whims of oil-rich governments, many of whom are not friends or allies of the United States. Perpetuating our dependence on foreign oil weakens our Nation.

We have the technology and expertise to drill safely. We don't have the luxury of time. We need to drill for domestic oil and natural gas now.

I thank you for your time and attention to my request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dan Burton". The signature is stylized with a large, looping initial "D" and a cursive "B".

Dan Burton
Member of Congress

DB/mfv