

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

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February 12, 2008

Secretary Samuel Bodman  
Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Secretary Bodman:

I understand you recently received correspondence from Members of Congress who disagree with the Administration's policy of making it a priority to fill the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR). I disagree with their suggestion to discontinue filling the SPR since it would have virtually no effect on oil and energy prices. It is vital to our economic and national security that we expand the SPR to serve as an emergency supply of crude oil in case of a major supply disruption. The SPR must be available to protect Americans in case of a true emergency, such as when the SPR was tapped after Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast in 2005. We must be prepared or face a national security risk that is an even higher price to pay resulting in scarcity of supply and higher energy prices when a major disruption occurs.

I am very concerned about the high energy and gas prices that Americans are facing today. However no longer filling the SPR and taking away from our emergency reserve supply is not the answer. We need a short-term solution that has long-term protection against oil supply disruptions. Best utilizing our existing oil and gas infrastructure to increase domestic production would increase supply and lower energy prices. Producing more energy at home would not only reduce our energy prices, but enhance our national security by reducing our reliance on foreign energy sources.

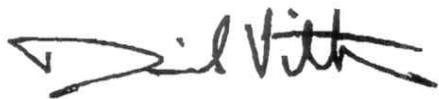
In addition, concern to reduce our dependence on foreign sources should compel the responsible exploration of resources here in our own backyard, especially off a state's own coast. For years, Gulf States have provided the infrastructure for oil and gas production, which supports the energy needs for the vast majority of our nation. We need to take advantage of the clean, safe domestic energy right here in the U.S. and work toward expanding domestic production and providing more access to Outer Continental, Shelf resources.

While I appreciate the need for alternative energy sources as an important long term goal, we cannot transform our nation's energy infrastructure and use alternative and renewable fuels overnight. I am disappointed the recently passed energy bill is virtually silent on oil and gas domestic production. With rising energy prices and increasing dependence on volatile foreign energy sources, we must allow for additional production of oil and gas right here in America—where we are safe, provide employment opportunities and are sensitive to environmental concerns. Unfortunately, the energy bill does nothing to provide short-term relief from high energy prices. Rather than opening new areas to production and attempting to provide some assurances of the economic stability of recovering domestic resources, the energy bill increases

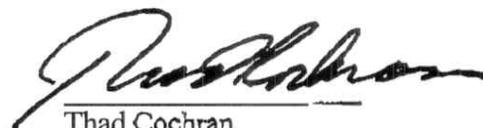
our dependence on foreign energy **sources**. Rather **than giving states the** option to host offshore production, **the energy bill does** not allow **U.S.** production to grow with demand, Even the best efficiency and conservation efforts must be complemented with additional domestic production in the short-term.

I look forward to continuing this discussion with you and **developing a stronger** national energy policy that will provide short-term relief and **strengthen our economic,** energy and national security.

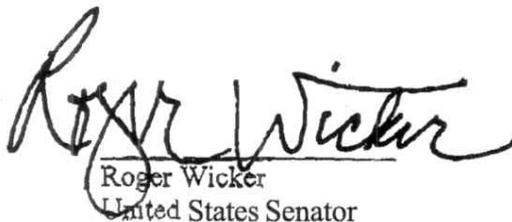
Sincerely,



David Vitter  
United States Senator



Thad Cochran  
United States Senator



Roger Wicker  
United States Senator

cc: Senator Jeff **Bingaman**, Chairman, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources