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Select Committee on
Energy Independence and Global Warming
U.S. House of Representatives

May 15, 2008

The Honorable George W. Bush
President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear President Bush:

Americans are facing record-breaking energy prices. Today, with the price of oil above \$122 per barrel and regular gas prices around the country averaging \$3.77 per gallon, it is time to consider all measures that can provide short-term relief to American consumers. This week, the House of Representatives and the Senate passed bills that would halt the fill of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. Hopefully, this action will serve as a first step towards alleviating pressure on prices in the near-term. Later this week, during your meeting with the leaders of Saudi Arabia, you have an opportunity for even greater impact. Saudi Arabia could readily increase oil production by 1 million barrels of oil a day, and we strongly urge you to persuade them to use their enormous resources to help American consumers by increasing their oil output.

Energy independence and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions must be central to America's long term energy plans, and the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 puts America on a path to achieve that goal. That law pushes America's transportation sector to become more efficient and also embrace advanced and cellulosic biofuels, electric plug-in hybrid vehicles, and smart growth strategies that make our cities more livable and facilitate mass transit. Unfortunately, those changes, opposed for years by the Republican-controlled Congress intent on pursuing a reckless fossil-focused energy policy, will take time to yield benefits to consumers. That is why it is so important for the U.S. to stop taking oil off the market, and why it is even more essential for you to persuade the Saudi government to increase oil production.

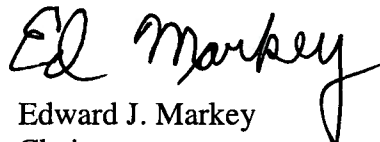
During the 2000 presidential campaign, you told voters that if elected you "would work with our friends in OPEC to convince them to open up the spigot, to increase the supply. . . use the capital that my administration will earn, with the Kuwaitis or the Saudis, and convince them to open up the spigot." You stated in 2000 that the next president "ought to get on the phone with the OPEC cartel and say we expect you to open your spigots And the President of the United States must jawbone OPEC members to lower the price"

Reality has been rather different. OPEC's production has been relatively flat since you took office and global demand has skyrocketed. Now is the moment when tough talk

needs to be supported with tough action. Saudi Arabia has the most significant surplus capacity of all oil-producing countries, and it amounts to nearly 1.8 million barrels per day. You should persuade the Saudi government to put this excess production capacity to work in the near-term, while American consumers are making the long-term transition to an economy less dependent on oil.

We hope your persuasion with Saudi leaders this week is effective. For the sake of Americans feeling the effects of climbing prices and declining real incomes, your mission to the Middle East is extremely important. This experience underscores that the days of oil diplomacy are numbered. An energy policy based on wishful thinking and foreign generosity is a recipe for disaster. The Energy Act of 2007 will change that, but until those good policies have a chance to work, consumers need the near-term relief that you can deliver.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ed Markey". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Edward J. Markey
Chairman