

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 22, 2010

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Majority Leader, House of Representatives
H-107, U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Madam Speaker and Majority Leader Hoyer,

As members of the Sustainable Energy & Environment Coalition (SEEC), we would like to thank you for your call to action to develop a comprehensive legislative response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. This is the worst environmental disaster our nation has ever faced, and we must reform the policies and regulatory structure that not only allowed this spill to happen but also slowed the cleanup response and created barriers to holding responsible parties accountable. We commend you for your work to put together a legislative package that addresses all these issues.

As the House of Representatives begins consideration of legislation in response to this spill, and to help prevent against future tragedies, we urge the inclusion of policies that will provide more stringent environmental regulations and safety standards for offshore and onshore fossil fuel energy development, enable stronger protection of American lands and waters, hold responsible companies accountable for all costs resulting from their failures in this spill, and put Americans to work cleaning and restoring Gulf Coast communities and ecosystems, among other relevant priorities.

We applaud our Committee Chairmen for addressing many necessary reforms in legislation that has been reported by the Natural Resources, Transportation & Infrastructure, and Energy & Commerce Committees. We support provisions in the *CLEAR Act*, *Oil Spill Accountability & Environmental Protection Act*, and *Blowout Prevention Act* (H.R. 3534, H.R. 5626, H.R. 5629, respectively) that will:

- Restructure the agency responsible for oversight, leasing, and regulation of offshore and onshore oil and gas activities;
- Provide for oil & gas royalty payments to fund the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) at its full authorization level, the Historic Preservation Fund, and the creation of the Ocean Resources Conservation and Assistance Fund (ORCA);
- Require offshore drilling rigs to use best available safety technologies, including blowout preventers and emergency shut off systems;
- Mandate the performance of an Environmental Impact Statement or Environmental Assessment at all stages of the offshore oil and gas leasing process, and repeal the 30-day statutory deadline for approval or denial of exploration plans;
- Provide the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) with an explicit role in offshore oil and gas exploration and leasing plans;

- Provide stronger protections for American waters by repealing Bush-era *Clean Water Act* exemptions for onshore oil and gas activities;
- Remove the statutory limitation on companies' financial liability for offshore oil spills to ensure that responsible companies are held fully accountable for their disastrous spill, and any future spills;
- Require all vessels engaging in drilling activities in the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) to be flagged American vessels, to ensure compliance with the highest level of safety enforcement;
- Increase royalty rates for oil and gas production and repeal deepwater royalty relief;
- Require the Secretary to consider the availability of oil spill response infrastructure when developing a 5 year leasing plan;
- Require companies to disclose all chemicals used in onshore oil and gas drilling activities on public lands; and
- Bar new offshore oil and gas leases and drilling permits to BP or any other company with a significant history of violating worker safety or environmental law.

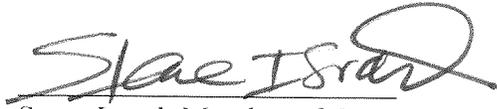
Also, we strongly urge that legislation that will come before the House includes provisions to:

- Establish an Office of Renewable Energy Development within the *CLEAR Act's* new three agency structure, and ensure that legislation encourages, not discourages, onshore and offshore deployment of renewable energy technologies;
- Create a 'Gulf Coast Community Conservation Corps' and expand the Workforce Investment Act to safely put Americans to work cleaning and restoring the Gulf Coast for as long as necessary, paid for by parties responsible for the spill (consistent with the *Gulf Coast Restoration Act*, H.R. 5654);
- Require companies to pay royalties on all American oil that it has lost in a spill (consistent with the *Spilled Oil Royalty Collection Act*, H.R. 5513);
- Close a legal loophole to ensure that oil companies will be held responsible for the oil spill liability of a bankrupted subsidiary (consistent with the *Stand by your Oil Pollution Act*, H.R. 5686);
- Provide protection for America's most vulnerable ecosystems by requiring specific precautions against offshore drilling in Important Ecological Areas (IEAs) (consistent with the *Protect our Oceans Act*, H.R. 5657); and
- Provide protections for private landowners that have federal minerals under their land (consistent with the *Protecting Rural Landscapes Act*, H.R. 5759).

We thank you for your past and continued consideration of our concerns on this matter.

Sincerely,

The Members of the Sustainable Energy & Environment Coalition



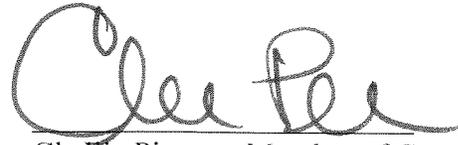
Steve Israel, Member of Congress
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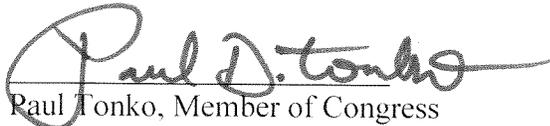
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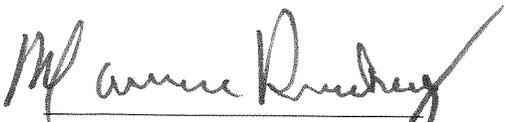
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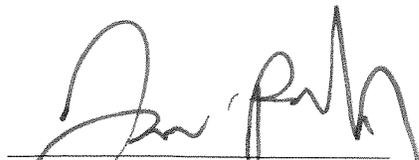
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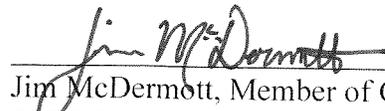
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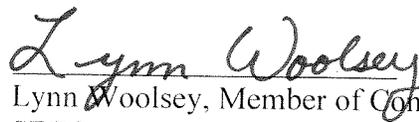
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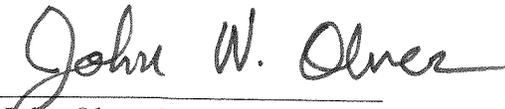
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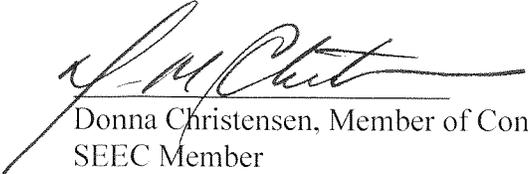
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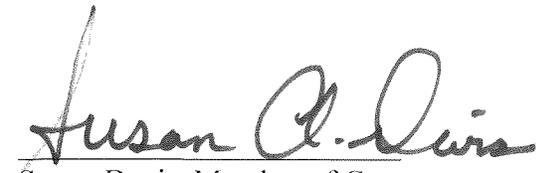

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Jim Langevin, Member of Congress
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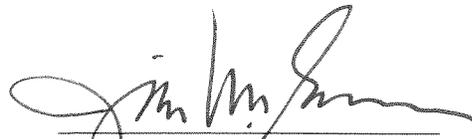

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Shelley Berkley, Member of Congress
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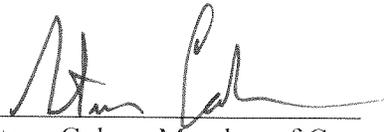

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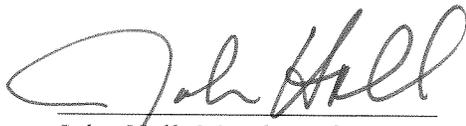
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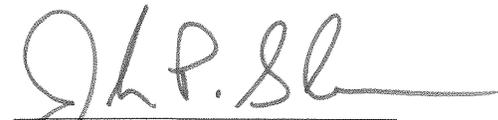
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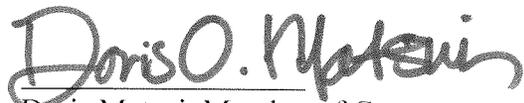
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