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ECONOMY**



**Mary Bono Mack**  
**Congress of the United States**  
45th District, California

May 4, 2011

WASHINGTON OFFICE:  
104 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-5330  
FAX: (202) 225-2961

DISTRICT OFFICES:  
36-953 COOK STREET  
SUITE 104  
PALM DESERT, CA 92211  
(760) 320-1076  
FAX: (760) 320-0596

1600 EAST FLORIDA AVENUE  
SUITE 301  
HEMET, CA 92544  
(951) 658-2312  
FAX: (951) 652-2562

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

The increasing price of gas and growing instability in the Middle East and North Africa are stark reminders that the United States must take serious steps to develop a comprehensive, long-term energy solution. At one time, \$5 per gallon gas seemed unthinkable, but that is no longer the case. With high gas prices in California – this week reaching an average of \$4.35 per gallon – more needs to be done to actively produce American-made energy.

Mr. President, our country is facing an economic emergency. The time is now to embrace real economic development and the first place to engage is our country's energy sector. I urge you to embrace this opportunity to set America on a path towards energy independence.

First, our country must adopt a comprehensive "all-of-the-above" energy approach, which will include more American-made resources including oil, natural gas, and biofuels. This will lower prices, create new American jobs, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, strengthen our national security and raise revenue to help tackle a looming \$15 trillion national debt.

The United States must get serious about developing alternative fuels; natural gas which is clean, abundant, and domestic can be the foundation of this policy. The recently introduced New Alternative Transportation to Give America Solutions Act (NAT GAS Act) will help accelerate the production and use of more natural gas-fueled vehicles. Specifically, it will provide incentives for the use of natural gas as a vehicle fuel; the purchase of natural gas fueled vehicles; and the installation of natural gas vehicle refueling property. Mr. President, I encourage your Administration's support of this proposal.

Second, the United States must expand American energy production -- both onshore and offshore. This will set us on a sustainable path forward. The bottom line: we're going to need oil and gas if America wants to keep the lights on. With energy such a fundamental input to the economy's functioning -- from fuels such as diesel and gasoline for transportation, to coal used in electricity production, to crude oil-derived fertilizers used in agriculture -- the safe exploration, extraction, and utilization of all of the country's resources is too important to be left to political agendas.

We should embrace the lessons learned after the devastating oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico and put Americans back to work. The U.S. Department of Interior's decision to issue only a handful of permits since the Deepwater Horizon explosion last April is hurting our economy. According to your Administration's estimates, the moratorium has resulted in 12,000 lost jobs, and rigs are continuously leaving the Gulf for foreign countries like Brazil and Egypt. It is troubling that production in the Gulf is expected to fall by 240,000 barrels per day this year, and furthermore, that this could be the first year since 1958 without an offshore lease sale. All the while, we are pouring money overseas.

Finally, Mr. President, we need to re-evaluate government policies that are driving up energy prices. Americans don't face a shortage of domestic energy, we face a surplus of government regulation. The Environmental Protection Agency's anti-business regulatory agenda will undoubtedly make gasoline and electricity even more expensive at a time when Americans can least afford it. For instance, Lion Oil, a high-tech American manufacturer headquartered in El Dorado, Arkansas, recently testified before the House Committee on Energy and Commerce about a major expansion project that would have increased their refinery output from 70,000 to 100,000 barrels a day, but was delayed due in part to the proposed EPA's costly greenhouse gas regulations.

The significant regulatory burden on America's small refiners will force the U.S. to become increasingly reliant on foreign refiners. Foreign refineries such as Jamnagar Refinery in India, the largest oil refinery site in the world that was built in only 36 months and has a processing capacity of up to 660,000 barrels a day, which is manufactured with the exclusive purpose of exporting to the West. I urge the Administration to focus on creating balanced, fair regulations that provide U.S. companies the regulatory certainty they need to grow and prosper and create the jobs of the future.

Mr. President, I urge your immediate action. Never has there been a time more urgent than today. With our economy on a slow path to economic recovery, we run the risk of high energy costs plunging America into yet another deep recession as seen in 2007 and 2008 when we faced \$150 a barrel oil. For every penny the price of gasoline increases, it costs consumers an additional \$4 million per day. That equals \$1.4 billion over an entire year. Nearly every single week the price of gas increases, acting as a major drag on our economy. It's time to take action.

Thank you for your immediate consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Bono Mack". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "M".

MARY BONO MACK  
Member of Congress