

February 28, 2006

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing about a matter of great concern to our state. Energy prices are on the rise across the nation, affecting citizens, industrial consumers and the agricultural industry. Since 2000, natural gas prices have risen 140% and oil prices have risen 107%. These rising prices have taken a toll on families and businesses across the nation. Our state of Utah is particularly hard hit by our energy situation, a situation made frustrating when we note that a large portion of the country's energy resources have been summarily withheld from the American people.

We understand that approximately 80% of the 1.6 billion acres of the Outer Continental Shelf is currently withdrawn from leasing for oil and gas development. However, when that withdrawal was instituted by President George H.W. Bush in 1990, his Executive Order was to be in place for ten years until necessary scientific studies could be completed. However, President Clinton then issued an Executive Order in 1998, extending the withdrawal until 2012, with no guidance to review or adapt the information learned in the studies. These are lands and resources that are owned by all the American people, including the people of Utah, and we urge you to revoke this withdrawal.

The effects of our energy shortfall can be seen throughout Utah. This winter, Utahns will see their monthly home heating bills jump between 20 and 30 percent. This coming spring, farmers face fertilizer prices of \$500 or more per ton, more than double the 2002 price. Over 7,600 Utahns are employed by the chemical industry, and these jobs are jeopardized by high energy costs. More than 4,000 Utahns are employed by Delta Airlines, a company forced to file for bankruptcy in September of last year, due in part to steep increases in the price of jet fuel. And, high energy costs have imperilled Utah's manufacturing industry, leading to over 10,000 manufacturing jobs leaving the state in the past five years.

We are doing our part to deal with the nation's crisis. Inland states like Utah are

doing more to increase domestic gas production, including allowing pilot projects in winter drilling and off-site mitigation. Our state is cooperating with federal agencies to coordinate energy production on public lands that lie within state borders, in an effort to meet the energy needs of all Americans.

However, the 1.6 billion acres of submerged public lands that lie off our nation's coasts also hold enormous potential for energy production, which could significantly help meet the energy needs of all Americans. The people of Utah own the lands and resources on the Outer Continental Shelf, and we ask that you revoke the withdrawals on these lands, and that the country's energy resources be developed in an environmentally responsible manner.

Sincerely,

Senator Thomas Hatch

cc: Senator Orrin Hatch
Senator Robert Bennett
Representative Rob Bishop
Representative Jim Matheson
Representative Chris Cannon