

AN OPEN LETTER TO CONGRESS ON OIL DEPENDENCY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

November 5, 2007

Dear Members of Congress:

As experienced and senior veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces, and as professionals working in the field of national security, we urge your support for maintaining the 35 mile-per-gallon (mpg) by 2020 fuel economy standard recently approved by the U.S. Senate in H.R. 6, the Renewable Fuels, Consumer Protection, and Energy Efficiency Act.

Our continued dependence on oil constitutes an immediate threat to our national security – economically, militarily and diplomatically. Increasing fuel efficiency for cars and trucks is the most effective and efficient manner to decrease that dependence. Even the National Petroleum Council recommends improving fuel economy standards by the maximum rate possible. And, the National Academy of Sciences reported in 2002 that technology already exists to increase fleetwide fuel economy to 37 mpg without changing the size, weight, or power of vehicles on the road today. The Senate bill, which only mandates 35 mpg, would save 1.2 million barrels per day – more than twice the amount we import daily from Iraq.

Much of the global oil supply is located in unstable and sometimes hostile nations, especially in the Middle East, and the burden on our military to safeguard access to that oil increases daily. Since fuel efficiency standards were allowed to stall in 1985, our net oil imports have more than doubled from 27% to 60%. Today, the United States imports more than 10 million barrels of oil every day. And, the Department of Energy predicts that our dependence will reach 70% by 2025. Our military's presence in oil-rich nations of the Middle East alone cost the U.S. taxpayer more than \$137 billion in 2006, according to the National Defense Council Foundation, whose analysis included the current Iraq war.

Reliance on unstable regions for a critical energy resource constrains U.S. foreign policy and can lead to political alignments that reduce U.S. leverage on other diplomatic issues. Additionally, the wealth we transfer to these regions in oil revenue has been used, and continues to be used, to fund terrorism and extremist, anti-American ideologies. According to the U.S. State Department, in 2006 alone there were more than 14,000 terrorist attacks worldwide, including those in Iraq, killing more than 20,000 noncombatants. In addition, our reliance on foreign oil leaves us economically exposed to attacks upon on already vulnerable infrastructure. A number of militant groups have explicitly called for strikes upon refineries. Large-scale, successful attacks could send oil prices soaring exponentially.

Fortunately, the Senate has approved a bill that addresses this threat head on. The bill, H.R. 6, calls for a fleet-wide 35 mpg standard by 2020, reducing U.S. oil use by 1.2 million barrels per day in 2020. The Senate bill's flexible "attributes based" design, in which manufacturers would meet separate mileage requirements for different vehicles based on attributes such as size and weight, safeguards U.S. manufacturing and consumer choice.

We urge you to take bold and urgently needed steps to help protect America by maintaining a 35 mpg fuel economy standard and opposing half-measures in the upcoming energy conference. As a nation, we can rise to and meet this challenge, with clear action and modern technology, to break an addiction to oil from unstable regions of the world. The longer we wait, the more dangerous and expensive the solution becomes.

Thank you for your attention to this critical national security matter.

Sincerely,