

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

COMMITTEE ON
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 14, 2009

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

Dear Mr. President:

During your meeting with Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper later this week, I respectfully urge you to include on your agenda a discussion of ways to advance construction of the Alaska natural gas pipeline project. As we have discussed several times over the past year, this project would create tens of thousands of good-paying jobs for Americans and Canadians, while supplying American homes and factories with an affordable, reliable source of clean-burning energy for decades.

The Alaska natural gas pipeline is the single project which can have the greatest positive economic impact on both countries at a time when the U.S. and Canadian economies sorely need it. Estimated to cost approximately \$30 billion, the 1,700 to 2,000-mile pipeline would deliver more than 4 billion cubic feet of natural gas a day from Alaska's North Slope to market, enough to provide nearly 7 percent of America's annual consumption of natural gas. About 750 miles of that pipeline would be laid in Alaska and more than 1,000 miles in Canada, with additional pipeline expansion possible to move the fuel around U.S. markets. Field work and community outreach already has been conducted in Canada to lay the groundwork for the project.

Building this enormous project through a project agreement, as called for in the Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline Act of 2004, would create thousands of jobs, from pipefitters to steel manufacturers, truck drivers to engineers. Just building the pipeline will require an estimated 2.5 million tons of steel and 50 million worker hours, the equivalent of 6,000 full-time workers for four years.

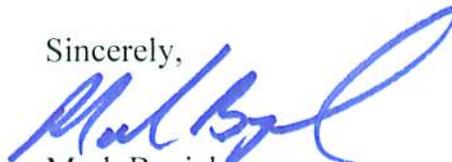
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This project also makes a significant statement about our nation's willingness to decrease its production of greenhouse gases while reducing our reliance on foreign sources of energy. Clean burning natural gas will be an important bridge fuel for the next half century or more, as we position the United States as a leader in creating the technology for a clean energy economy. In even the most optimistic scenarios, the United States will need to burn more fossil fuels than it does today for decades to come. Alaska natural gas can fill that need while putting Americans to work.

There are currently two competing applicants to build the pipeline, with both planning to solicit shipping customers in an "open season" next year. The Alaska natural gas pipeline is truly an international project and its progress would be enhanced by you and Prime Minister Harper elevating its importance and signaling your strong support for an accelerated development timetable.

During your campaign and now as President, you have recognized the enormous significance of this project to America's economy and energy security. Your meeting with Prime Minister Harper is an excellent and timely opportunity to advance this vital project.

Sincerely,



Mark Begich
United States Senator